DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION
IN
SOUTH INDIA

By
K A NILAKANTA SASTRI



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PREFACE

At the invitation of The American Historical Association and the University of Chicago, I became Visiting Professor at that University during the spring and summer quarters of 1959 I delivered lectures in three courses on South Indian History and the present book is based upon one of them bearing on Development of Religion in South India

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I INTRODUCTION

Religion has generally formed one of the most important factors in the life and history of all nations In India it has animated social life in an exceptional measure and the concept of Dharma has commanded universal allegiance throughout the sub-continent in all its history It has exerted its influence even on the followers of alien faiths like Islam and Christianity, which in their turn have also influenced it, though perhaps not to the same extent It is the aim of this little book to trace the leading religious movements in the history of South India and assess the contribution made by their leaders at different times to the practice of religion and the speculations of philosophy which in India were seldom divorced from religion

By South India we mean the entire triangular peninsula south of the dividing line formed by the Vindhya mountains and the Narmada and Tapti rivers in the west and the Mahanadi in the east This region has been held to be one of the oldest habitats of man, say from 300 000 B C ; this view gains support from the discovery of considerable numbers of paleoliths crude stone implements in various parts though not of skeletal remains of humans These were followed by microliths, some of which are thought to be as old as 6000 B C if not earlier, though their use seems to have continued till relatively much later The remains of the neolithic age are more plentiful, though not enough to give a clear picture of its life and culture Many megalithic monuments have come to light and these constitute tangible evidence of the latest phases of the pre-history of South India—a subject that is being studied systematically only of late

Megalithic settlements are generally found on the slopes of hills or amidst rocky outcrops in the neighbourhood of natural

tanks and reservoirs, and it seems probable that the people who erected the megalithic monuments also introduced the cultivation of rice by irrigation in South India They brought also 'an elaborate equipment of iron, wheel turned pottery, and the custom of burying the dead, sometimes, collectively, after exposure and excarnation, in megalithic cists with a round port-hole or doorway in one end'[1] More or less contemporaneous with these cists are urnfields where the dead are seen buried in large pear-shaped urns associated with smaller urns One of the best known of these urnfields is that of Ādiccanallur on the *Tāmraparni river in the Tinnevelly District In the neighbourhood* of Madras a terracotta sarcophagus on legs takes the place of the urns The urnfields have no megaliths but share many common features with them[2] Finds in some sites of Cyprus and Syria dating from about 1200 B C, include iron tridents bronze cocks, gold mouth pieces and other articles very similar *to those found in Ādiccanallur, the megaliths of eastern Medi*terranean and Western Asia also closely resemble those of the Deccan and South India, but they have been dated round about 1500 B C Facts like these suggest the probability that the megalithic culture of South India may have been brought by a *western* people across the Arabian Sea to South India several centuries earlier than the post Asokan period to which Wheeler has with good reason assigned the artifacts of Brahmagiri *D H Gordon and Haimendorf are inclined to suggest some date* about 800 or 700 B C for this event Considering the manner in which the Tamil Kingdoms are mentioned in Asokan edicts this date would seem to be nearer the truth than any later date

Very plausibly Haimendorf has suggested that this megalithic folk who came into South India by sea from the west were the Dravidians who in course of time not only imposed their own speech on the pre Dravidian population of the South, but soon became ready to absorb and profit by the Indo-Aryan influences which began to flow in from Northern India within a few centuries of their arrival Till recently it was vaguely assumed that Dravidian speaking peoples were spread over practically the whole of India before the Aryans came, and that they were identical with the Dasas and Dasyus of the Rigveda, the views of Sir Herbert Risley on the races and cultures of pre-Aryan and Indo-Aryan India formulated in the early years of the twentieth century were largely based on this assumption

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[1] Wheeler in Smith *O H I*[3] p 36
[2] *Ancient India* No 9 pp 110-11

The subsequent progress of linguistic analysis and of anthropological studies has led to very different conclusions pointing to a more complex picture The Dasa-Dasyus now seem to be affiliated to the pre-Aryan peoples of Eastern Iran and Afghanistan and to have occupied a considerable area in the North-west of India which certainly included the Indus Valley and the Punjab Lands lying more to the east in Northern India, the Gangetic plain and the Vindhyan highlands, were occupied by Austric speaking peoples who are best described as Nisadas The north-eastern sector of Northern India and more generally the Himalayan regions formed the home of peoples with a strong Mongoloid admixture who are now designated Kirātās[3] Most probably the Dravidian speaking people whom we now find confined to South India did not occupy any extensive tracts in the rest of India though at various times and for specific reasons they may have spilled over as colonies into the North, like the Brahuis in Baluchistan The attempt, particularly by the late Father H Heras, to trace the Indus Valley Culture to the Dravidians and to interpret the inscriptions on the numerous seals as proto-Dravidian has not received the assent of scholars, and until the script of these inscriptions is deciphered satisfactorily, the genesis and the language of the culture must remain open questions The claim that the pre-Aryan Dravidians enjoyed a highly developed civilization rests only on data drawn from the literature of the Sangam[4] period, data to which a fanciful antiquity of several thousands of years is ascribed by credulous or 'patriotic' writers[5] Bishop Caldwell who sought to reconstruct the pre-Aryan culture of the Dravidians by a relatively critical study of the words in Tamil, doubtless one of the most ancient of the surviving Dravidian languages, did not find any support for the extravagant claims of the writers mentioned above but discovered the elements of a culture that had made some progress towards a settled social and political order, but was still very far from having attained the complexity of the organization reflected in the literature of the Sangam period[6] The

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[3] S K. Chatterji Race Movements and Prehistoric Culture ch VIII in *Vedic India* — History and Culture of the Indian People Vol I (1951)

[4] The Sangam (Skt Sangha) was an Academy of Tamil maintained by the early Pandyas in Madurai — according to legend dating from the eighth or ninth century and a copper plate grant of the early tenth century

[5] cf P T Srinivasa Iyengar — *Pre Aryan Tamil Culture*

[6] Caldwell *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*[3], pp 113-4

fact remains that Dravidian culture becomes articulate and enters the field of authentic recorded history only after its contact with Indo-Aryan The earliest inscriptions of the Tamil country are found engraved on stone surfaces in natural caverns slightly improved by art and just rendered habitable, the inscriptions themselves are short records in southern Brāhmi characters of about the third or second century B C at the earliest, and already contain such Sanskrit words as *Kutumbika* though otherwise composed of Tamil in its formative stage These brief records are generally donative or commemorative in character, and give the names of donors or resident monks of the caverns who were probably both Buddhists and Jains The literature of the Śangam age, i e, of the early centuries of the Christian era, appears to reflect conditions as they stood some three or four centuries after the period of the short cave inscriptions That literature is now accessible only in schematic anthologies made much later Many of these anthologies open with an invocatory song in praise of Śiva and His attributes and exploits and this song is by the poet 'Perundevanar who sang the *Bharatam*', i e, translated the Great Epic (*Mahabhārata*) into Tamil poetry Now, the earliest extant Tamil *Bharatam* is a work of considerable length which, like *Campus* in Sanskrit, uses both prose and poetry in the narrative, it was the work of a Perundevanar who was a contemporary of the Pallava king Nandivarman III in the ninth century A D It has been suggested that this poet was the compiler of the anthologies But one cannot be sure of this, for we gather from a Pandyan inscription of the tenth century[7] that the Pandyan kings had the *Mahabharata* translated into Tamil, besides establishing the Śangam This implies that there was an earlier Tamil version of the *Bharatam*, and it is *prima facie* more likely that it was this author of the Pāṇḍyan country that put together the anthologies as we now have them The anthologies present problems of literary chronology which are similar to those of the Rigveda and are nearly as difficult of satisfactory solution

Tamil, the language which possesses the oldest of the known literatures in the Dravidian languages, occupies the extreme south of the peninsula and its area now coincides with the state of Madras with a population of about 30 millions of whom less than 4 millions speak other languages than Tamil It may be noticed *en passant* that the reorganization of the Indian States (1956) has resulted for the first time in India's history, in the

[7] Larger Sinnamanur plates — Tamil part SII II

creation of linguistic States, time must show whether the resulting cultural solidarity of the individual states will be duly restrained or burst the bond of political unity inherited from British rule and cherished by the Constitution of the Union Kerala on the west coast of South India, the home of the Malayalam language, is a smaller state with a population of 13 5 millions, the Malayalam literature is the youngest of Dravidian literatures with a history beginning in the thirteenth or fourteenth century A D Mysore contains 14 5 million Kannada speakers besides five million others, the extant literature in Kannada dates from the tenth century, though we have in the *Kavirajamarga*, 'the Royal Road of Poets', c 850 A D, a rhetorical work which presupposes the existence of a considerable body of prose and poetry in the language A Greek farce recorded in a papyrus of the third century A D is held by some scholars to contain several expressions in Kannada, but this unconvincing claim has not gained acceptance and the beginnings of Kannada literature must be assigned to rather three centuries later, if not more Telugu is the main language of Andhra Pradesh spoken by about 31 millions, its literature begins from the eleventh century, though the inscriptions of an earlier time contain stray verses in native metres These are the four principal Dravidian languages There are several others spoken by small numbers and with no written literature worth the name, they are of interest to philologists and not of much concern for our purpose Maraṭhī is the speech of 27 millions in Western Deccan and Oriya of about 13 millions in the north-east of peninsular India, these are Indo-Aryan languages — extensions of North India into the South

All the modern Indian languages, southern as well as northern, have developed from the beginning on a common background of culture furnished by Sanskrit language and literature, particularly the two great epics and the Purānas The process by which this common cultural background was rendered acceptable to non-Sanskritic peoples used to be called Aryanization and has come to be designated more recently as 'Sanskritization', not a more satisfactory term by any means Though conflicts were not unknown at first, the change was effected on the whole more by peaceful and steadily pervasive penetration than by military conquest This was particularly so in the South where unlike in the North, the Dravidian languages have survived in all their strength and vastly improved under the new influences and many facets of the old pre-Aryan culture have been integrated with the new Aryan and the integration is often

so complete as to render it next to impossible to separate the elements of the amalgamated culture In the sphere of our particular concern, that of religion and philosophy, the South is seen to start with a heavy debt to the North, but more than amply to repay by her own distinctive contributions to theory and practice

Other influences flowed in from outside in the course of centuries *Graeco-Roman, Scythian Islamic and so on and these* were accepted and assimilated to the extent possible and necessary In this age-long process, the contact with the western European nations, which began in the sixteenth century and reached its culmination in the establishment of British rule over the whole of India early in the nineteenth century, marked a very important stage The Portuguese brought to India the chilli, *potato, and other produce not known in India earlier* The extent to which the French influenced the daily speech of those who came into close touch with them can be judged by a perusal of the pages of the unique diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai But the most abiding influence was that of the English language and literature which began to be felt even before the historic decision to impart modern education in India with English as the medium *of instruction* (1835)

In fact that decision was itself, in part, the result of the pressure of Indian public opinion voiced by advanced leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy who by their voluntary efforts had put themselves in close touch with the new forces and felt their bracing effects Ideals of national unity, individual freedom, constitutional government and social equality and mobility embodied in English literature and thought opened out new horizons, and the time-honoured institutions and values inherited from a distant past in unbroken continuity began to change and reshape themselves under the impact of the new forces *From the beginning there were two sides to the process* One was the tendency to admire everything English and European and to condemn everything oriental and Indian, this aspect led Macaulay and those of his way of thought to expect that in course of time, India would so change that the people of India *would be Indians by birth but Englishmen in all other respects* That this has not come about is due to the other side of the effects of the Western impact This consisted in an attempt to revalue indigenous traditions and institutions in the light of the new ideas, distinguish their essentials from superficial accretions, and adapt them to the extent necessary to make them fit into *modern conditions and to make India a progressive nation like*

in part in the different strata of vedic literature which is the only known contemporary record to aid the study of these changes

To put the matter briefly and in broad outlines · the *samhitās* of the Yajurveda and the Sāmaveda show that the religion of sacrifice had become very much more elaborate than before, while the fourth and last of the vedas, the Atharvaveda apparently includes many beliefs and practices drawn from non-Aryan sources; it is to be noted that this veda gained recognition only relatively late, and it long continued to be the rule to talk of *Trayī*, the three vedas, alone as canonical The large volume of *Brahmana* literature which has survived, after much has been lost on account of diverse reasons, is of the nature of prose commentaries on their respective vedas, and they also exhibit further stages in the elaboration of the sacrificial religion, they contain myths, stories and speculations, and are often so jejune as to be justly described as 'babblings' They also contain many ideas and beliefs that are held to be ultimately of non-Aryan origin

The Upaniṣads come generally at the end of the *Brāhmanas*, including the *Āranyakas* ('forest books', meant to be studied in forests and not in homes), they are much better known as they deserve to be, embody a strong reaction from the religion of sacrifice, and bear witness to the prevalence of an earnest and fervent effort to solve the problems of high philosophy The truly early upanisads that have survived are just about a dozen, their number has been swelled in more recent times by the addition of new texts, because each new religious sect as it came up wanted to have its own upanisad and produced it, their present total number is believed to stand at the sacred figure of 108 The ideas of *Karma* and transmigration, *unknown to early vedic literature, have become basic* postulates in the upanisads, and thenceforth almost all religious systems that came up in India felt compelled to build on this foundation

The period of the early upaniṣads was a time of intense *speculation and spiritual progress not only in India but in* all the lands from the Aegean basin to China, it was also the period when Jainism and Buddhism were formulated The further stages of religious evolution in ancient India included a long and varied process of syncretism between the vedic religion *and the indigenous cults which resulted in the birth of a rich* pantheon of Puranic gods and goddesses together with a colourful mythology of divine and semi-divine occurrences and the rise

of a strong theistic trend stressing intense devotion (*bhakti*) to a personal god as the easiest if not the only road to the attainment of *moksa* (or release from the cycle of repeated births *samsara*), another trend, already noticeable in the veda, to which Max Muller gave the name of henotheism, mingled with *bhakti* to produce sectarianism of a pronounced character, this, in turn, was followed by efforts to blunt the edge of sectarian animosities and effect a conciliation among the sects

By the side of these developments there were others of a more intellectual type which led to the elaboration of separate systems of philosophy, of which six came to be regarded as most important in later times, though many more claimed recognition and got it at the hands of Madhava who wrote in the fourteenth century A D a concise manual of the different systems or *darsanas* in his *Sarva Darsana Sangraha* The celebrated *Bhagavad-gita* reflects a much earlier stage in the history of these developments and rightly has it been described as a great eirenicon All these changes concern what we may call the higher religious consciousness of India, the 'Great Tradition'—to adopt a convenient term suggested by Redfield The different varieties of popular faiths and beliefs which varied with time and place and covered many forms of faith ranging from crude animism expressing itself in the worship of stocks and stones right up to very refined forms of philosophic thought and religious practice, on the whole this may be called the 'Little Tradition' The mutual reactions between the Great Tradition and Little Tradition constitute perhaps the most fascinating as well as the most complicated chapters in the history of Hinduism, using the term in its broadest sense so as to include Jainism and Buddhism

Another important aspect of the Hindu religion was its concern from the earliest times with all aspects of the individual and social life of man and its attempt to regulate the social set up in the light of an accepted philosophy The concept of *Dharma*, the entire system of *Varnas* (classes) and *Aśramas* (stages of life), and all the rituals to be observed in daily life and in the important crises of the life cycle belong to this sphere Their gradual adoption often piece-meal by new strata of society, a process which according to some observers has not yet come to an end, is one of the most notable features of the 'Sanskritization mentioned above Not all the rituals are followed by all castes and groups, but all accept the common ideology underlying ritualism, and a pronounced tendency towards standardization and uniformity in the observances was at work in all India Pilgrimages to sacred spots and shrines distributed over all parts of the country

including its extreme frontiers must be counted as part of this ritualism, it was not the least important among the factors promoting and maintaining the cultural unity of the country, it is still a valid force operating among the vast majority of the people

Hindu civilization as we know it in history may be said to have taken its definite shape by the time of the Buddha Since then foreigners came into India on several occasions and for different purposes Till about A D 1000, however, though they sometimes succeeded in establishing political rule over parts of the country their advent did not mean any great change in its religious outlook or sociology They often adopted one or other of the Indian faiths, becoming, for instance, devotees of Buddhism or the Bhagavata cult, and were accorded a place in Hindu society by being vaguely designated as Kṣatriyas of sorts by the writers of Hindu law books (*dharma śastras*) After 1000 India came into massive contact with credal religions that were exclusive and even intolerant in their outlook, first Islam and later Christianity But on the whole Hinduism stood its ground Even after six or seven centuries of political and military domination of the land, Islam was found to have made a tangible impression only in those corners of the country in the north-west and north-east which separated from the rest of the country in 1947 and form Pakistan today Muslims also form a substantial minority in the rest of India, but both in India and Pakistan the bulk of them have retained many Hindu beliefs and practices, in Java they have done so even in a larger measure Though there were extensive changes in all departments of life as a result of Muslim rule in the North, Southern India particularly the region south of the Krsna river, was kept on the whole free from the Muslim impact by the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar, southern Hinduism has thus been able to maintain the continuity of its tradition much better than the northern

As for Christianity, it has been represented on the west coast of South India from relatively early times, the Portuguese put forth much effort in the sixteenth century to bring about mass conversions, and later, numerous missionary bodies both Roman Catholic and Protestant made sustained efforts at winning over Indians to their faith, employing education and medical care as the means of developing contact with the people, the missionaries shared with Macaulay the view that a short period of western education and the Bible 'would not leave an idolator in Bengal' or India But these hopes have been falsified and though on occasions a measure of success has attended missionary efforts among the so called lower ranks of the people in some

parts of the country, the main effect of the Christian attack on Hinduism in modern times has been to evoke movements of internal reform for the abolition of age long evils and this has contributed to strengthen and vitalize Hinduism The world wide activity of the Ramakrishna Mission may be cited, but who can decide how much of it is modelled on Christian missions, and how much harks back to the model of the Buddhist *sanghas* of old ?

It will be the aim of the succeeding pages to trace in some detail these fascinating developments within Hindu society with particular reference to occurrences in South India and their contribution to the common fund The object of this introduction has been to show that developments in the South cannot be studied in isolation but always against the background of move ments in the whole country

II INTEGRATION OF CULTS AND THE BEGINNINGS OF HINDUISM THE AGE OF THE SANGAM

The fusion of Aryan with non Aryan cults began immediately after the Aryans entered India, and the process had a long course lasting over many centuries before the new culture crossed the Vindhyas to continue the same process in the South probably by much milder methods evolved by long experience in the North We hear of wars with the Dasyus in early vedic literature which praises Indra the chief of the gods for protecting the Arya varna against the Dasyu, expatiates on his exploits which quite obviously are modelled on those of a tribal war leader, and describes some battles and alliances of a manifestly historical nature There is no record of such conflicts in the South The *Ramayana* which localizes some of the adventures of the Prince of Ayodhya in some identifiable spots in the south like Pancavaṭi (Nasik) and Pampa (perhaps near Hampi) altogether lacks a historical basis its monkeys and ogres who inhabit the South are totally mythical and one may sooner get oil by pressing sea sand than derive light on the Aryanization of the South from the central incidents of the poem The talk of monkey (vanara) totem and vanara-civilization as facets of pre Aryan Dravidian culture is altogether misplaced The poetic descriptions of *asramas* (hermitages) which provide the background of the incidents may however be accepted as the reflection of a stage in the Aryanization of the South as visualized by the poet, and possibly though this is perhaps on the more doubtful margin the hindrances the inmates of the *asramas* experienced from the hostility of the ogres contain a hint of the conflict of cultures at their first meeting The earliest stratum of the articulate literature of the Tamils the literature of the Sangam contains no hint whatever of such conflict but on the other hand bears clear testimony that Aryan culture was welcomed and eagerly adopted by the Tamils

We have however other legends that have plausibly been interpreted as reminiscent of historical occurrences They centre round the sage Agastya a vedic seer who came to embody in

himself all the stages of the progressive Aryanization not only of India but of Indonesia and Indochina His abode (*asrama*) which is first located in the Himalayas moves by several stages to the extreme south of India the Agastyakuṭa or the Peak of Agastya at the southern end of the Western Ghats and crosses the seas thence to Indonesia and Indochina He still receives special worship in South India which also contains several Śiva temples all designated by the name Agastyesvara which means an Īsvara (Śiva) shrine set up by Agastya The vedic Agastya has a miraculous birth like many other heroes of nations but otherwise he is a historical person as real as the kings and tribes mentioned in the Rigveda he composes hymns has a wife and sister and perhaps also a son His life history receives full treatment in the two epics of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* and many new legends are recorded about him the Puranas and Tamil tradition mark still further stages of this development

Three achievements ascribed to Agastya are of particular significance to the story of progressive Aryanization of South India and the East *First* Agastya is said to have prevailed upon the Vindhya mountains to cease growing in height until he returned to his Northern abode from the South whither he was going on some business but the sage never returned and the mountain continues to be stunted Later Tamil tradition mentions Siva s marriage with Parvati in Mount Kailas as the occasion for Agastya s southward exodus and explains that the exodus was meant to redress the balance of the earth rudely disturbed by the assemblage of all divinities in the North for the occasion *Secondly* Agastya is said to have destroyed the Raksasa brothers Ilvala and Vatapi the brothers hated all Brahmans because one of them had refused to grant Ilvala s request for a son equal to Indra and their revenge took a curious form Ilvala transformed Vatapi into a ram and offered his flesh as food to Brahmans and then recalled him to life as whomsoever Ilvala summoned with his voice would come back even from the abode of Yama (Death) and Vatapi would come out laughing after ripping the flanks of the Brahmans who had eaten his flesh Thus the brothers killed many Brahmans Meanwhile Agastya had to satisfy his wife Lopamudra a princess from Vidarbha who had laid down a condition for her fulfilling her marital duties towards him viz that he should approach her on a bed like that which she used to have in her father s palace that he should be adorned with costly ornaments for the occasion and that Agastya should procure these things without in

any way impairing his ascetic merit Agastya approached three kings in succession, none of them could meet his demand without detriment to their kingdoms, and so all the four of them went together to Ilvala, who received them and entertained Agastya in the usual manner But when he summoned Vatapi there came out only air out of Agastya's stomach Vātapi having been already digested there Then the saddened Ilvala gave Agastya twice as much wealth as Agastya wanted, after the latter had correctly guessed Ilvala's intentions regarding the gift Agastya and his companions go back, and Agastya duly begets a son on Lopamudra by name Dṛḍhasyu who relieves the ancestors of Agastya and obtains for them the *lokas* (happy abodes) they desired in the other world This is the story found in the *Mahabharata* The *Ramāyana* version differs in some respects, the most important being that after Vatāpi's death Ilavala attacks Agastya and is burnt to death by the irate sage, and that there is no mention here of Agastya's compact with his wife or his demand for wealth Rāma who narrates the story of Agastya to his brother Laksmana on the eve of their visit to the *asrama* of the sage's brother, begins his narration with the round assertion 'This verily is the *asrama* of the brother of Agastya who, intent upon the good of the world overpowered the death like demons and thereby rendered this quarter (i e Dandakaranya or the forest of Dandaka) habitable' The *third* achievement of Agastya was to drink up the waters of the ocean to enable the *devas* (gods) to dispose of their enemies (the *asuras*) who had taken refuge under the sea These three achievements have been understood to represent respectively the crossing of the Vindhyas into the Deccan by the bearers of Indo-Aryan culture to that region the initial opposition to that culture on the part of the indigenous inhabitants of the South which however, soon died away and gave place to a more propitious attitude, and the spread of the culture to the eastern lands across the sea There are several inscriptions in Sanskrit attesting the prominent place held by Agastya (*Bhatara guru*) in the pantheon of Indonesia and Indochina in the first millennium of the Christian era

Another name that bears an equally close connection with the Aryanization of South India and of the East is that of Kaundinya which is also, like Agastya the name of a *gotra* (Indo-Aryan *gens*) There are in existence quite a number of stone and copper plate inscriptions in the South Indian languages regarding land gifts to members of the Kaundinya *gotra* among others in different parts of the country from different dynasties

piyan was the most celebrated of the twelve pupils of this great sage The difference between the two schools represented here regarding the position of Agastya in Tamil culture is perhaps best understood as the reflection of a difference in their attitude to the Aryan Sanskrit culture of the North Those who welcomed it and were ready to acknowledge its good effects stood up for the traditional view; others who wished to defend the independence of Tamil and minimize its debt to Sanskrit repudiated the traditional position of Agastya This difference persists even at the present day, and we see attempts to expunge from Tamil all words and letters of Sanskrit origin leading to a tangible loss of richness and ease of expression But then it may be pointed out that even Tolkappiyan who is taken for an apostle of the independence of Tamil bears a name which means the ancient scion of the Kāvyas i e members of the *gotra* of Kavi (the sage Usanas) The truth is that Sanskrit is the taproot of all Indian culture as we know it in history, and in this respect South India and Tamil culture are in no way different from the rest of the country

The gradual extension of the connotation of the term Āryavarta (land of the Aryans) is also worth noting in this connection The *Manusmrti* (the code of Manu), the earliest of the metrical law books of India, probably assumed its present form in the early centuries before and after the Christian era Some verses (17-23) in the second chapter of that work reveal the stages in the extension of Aryandom The first of these verses defines Brahmāvarta (the land of the Veda) as the region lying between the holy rivers of Sarasvati and Dṛṣadvati and affirms that it was created by the gods, the next verse states that the traditional usages (*acara*) of that region set the model for others to follow Then there was the Brahmarsideśa (the country of the Brahman seers) adjacent to Brahmavarta and comprising Kuruksetra (the field of the Kurus where the Great Battle of the *Mahabharata* was fought, the historic Panipat plain) and the countries of the Matsyas, Pañcalas and Śurasenas, all men in the world should be instructed on their respective mores from the Brahman born in this region The region between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas bounded by Vinaśana (the place where the Sarasvati river disappears in the sands of the Rajaputana desert) on the west and Prayaga (Allahabad) on the east is known as Madhyadeśa (21) Again the entire area between the two mountains already named and the seas on the west and east, (i e the whole of what we now call Northern India) is described as Aryavarta by the learned (22) The name Arya-

varta is explained by the commentators as indicating that Aryas appear over and over again in this region, and Medhātithi, the earliest extant commentator (ninth century), states expressly that though the land may pass for a time under the rule of barbarians (*mlecchas*), yet it is soon restored to orthodoxy by the reappearance of Aryas — a comment full of historical import if we consider his date falling after the first Muslim impact on North India and on the eve of the definitive Muslim conquest of the North Lastly, all lands where the black buck (spotted antelope) roams about naturally are fit places for the performance of the *yajna* (vedic sacrifice), i e places where Aryas could reside, all beyond is barbarian country (*mlecchadesa*) (23) Here is a conscious extension of the limits of Aryadesa to lands other than Northern India, and whether the test of the natural presence of the spotted antelope is literally fulfilled or not there is little doubt that this last verse includes India south of the Vindhyas and is capable of application to Indonesia and Indo china as well In this context we are forcibly reminded of the seven inscriptions from East Borneo engraved on stone *yupas* (sacrificial posts to which the animals are tied before being sacrificed), and detailing many vedic sacrifices by name which were performed for the king Mulavarman by Brahmins who had gone there specially for the purpose[4]

This expansion of Indo Aryan civilization was naturally accompanied by a considerable mixture of races (Vyāsa — lit compiler, arranger, of the Vedas and author of *Mahabhārata* and Purānas — was reputed to be a son of a fisherwoman) and cultures and the assimilation of many aspects of the thought and practice of the non Aryan culture with which it came into contact, as a result the vedic gods and religion underwent several changes and a new composite religious and philosophical background was created on which arose the historic Hinduism which has baffled all attempts at defining it in simple terms or analysing clearly its component elements The most striking feature of Hindu society is its cultural pluralism Peoples belonging to different grades of spiritual (and material) culture were received and assigned a definite place in an elastic framework and then allowed to jostle with one another in the activities and ceremonies of their daily lives The exact details of the stages of the adjustment will perhaps never be known, but its broad results stand out in the clearly mixed character of the chief gods of

[4] *South Indian Influences* pp 137-40

the Hindu pantheon and in the appearance of new concepts in the realm of philosophy and metaphysics

Siva and Viṣṇu are the most prominent Hindu deities and constitute together with the more or less anaemic Brahma the celebrated triad (Trimurti) who are believed to create (Brahma) protect (Visnu) and destroy (Śiva) the universe again and again in the course of countless aeons These two gods are by no means prominent in the Rigveda and even the name Siva is unknown in that Veda as the name of a god the word being generally used as an adjective meaning propitious or as a proper name being applied to a tribe who survived at least till the time of Alexander as the Siboi of the Greeks and whose city Sivapura is also known to relatively late literary sources But these gods are seen to have gathered many new features and become more concrete and important divinities in the later vedic literature and there is good reason to trace many of these new features to syncretism with non Aryan factors The Rigvedic precursor of Śiva is Rudra generally regarded as a storm god representing more the baleful side of the storm in the destructive agency of lightning than the fertilizing and cleaning agency of the rain The word Rudra has generally been held to come from the root *rud* to cry and has been interpreted as the Howler But the suggestion has also been made that it is derived from *rud* with the conjectural meaning to shine or 'to be ruddy so that Rudra is the red god Rudra is also a great healer who has a thousand auspicious remedies and is the greatest physician of physicians If he is described as *Siva* (auspicious) it is as much for this reason as just to gain his good will and escape his wrath by flattering him and Siva thus became the regular name of Rudra s historical successor in post Vedic mythology He has close association with Agni (Fire) In later times this divinity was also regarded as Pasupati Mahayogi and Mahakala The first two of these epithets meaning respectively the Lord of the Animal World and the Great Yogi are anticipated in the celebrated seal from Mohenjodaro where we find a perhaps three headed figure seated in the posture of a *yogi* and surrounded by a number of animals viz. an elephant a tiger a rhinoceros a buffalo and two antelopes with long horns Even in the Rigveda Rudra is called *paśupa* protector of animals and prayers are addressed to him to spare the domestic cattle of the suppliant from the shafts of his anger If as is generally held the Harappa culture and Vedic culture represent pre Aryan and Aryan strands we have here an instance of the syncretism of allied features from the two cultures into a new amalgam We may also note that

in later times, particularly in the philosophy of the Śaiva-Siddhanta system, the term *pasupati* gained another interpretation; in that philosophy it was explained as 'Lord of souls'—*Pati* (Lord Supreme God) and *Pasu* (individual soul) forming together with *Pasa* (bond lit rope) the triple basis of the phenomena of the universe—a more or less typical instance of new applications of old forms to be traced throughout the long history of Hinduism As for *Yoga* (cf yoke) the practice of establishing increasing control over mind and body by continuous practice of prescribed exercises (under guidance to start with), it is attested in Harappa civilization not only by the *paśupati* seal just mentioned, but by a number of other minor antiquities as well Śiva as the Great yogi is held in later religious thought to be himself clad in an animal skin (*krttivasas*) while being the bestower of high material prosperity on his devotees The *kala* (time) aspect of Śiva is best typified in the Mahakala shrine at Ujjain, here he embodies not only death and destruction, but the power of regeneration also, the negative aspect is stressed in his association with crematoria and his leadership of groups of *bhūtas* (goblins), *pretas* (the unredeemed souls of the dead), and *pisacas* (goblins) The positive side is seen in his representation as a phallus (*linga*) The phallic significance of the *linga* is sought to be denied at times and it is taken to represent the formless absolute This sophistic interpretation finds much support in relatively late literary sources and its validity is unquestionable Nevertheless, it is quite probable that originally some primitive fertility cults and practices were absorbed in the growing complex of the Rudra-Śiva concept, the pejorative reference to *Sisnadevas* (phallicists) in the Rigveda and the realistic modelling of the lingas in early Indian sculpture alike support this view of the evolution of the Śiva cult Śiva is often represented by a Bull, which also serves as his mount Closely allied to the Kala aspect is that of Bhairava (lit terrifying) which has many varieties and forms the centre of many legends Combining both the positive and negative aspects is the more amiable form of *Śiva as Naṭaraja (the lord of Dance), the cosmic significance* of whose rhythmic dance is interpreted in different ways in different contexts and by different sources It is not possible here to go further into the many forms of Śiva and the legends concerning them, we must however, note that these forms and legends have furnished the themes of a rich iconography which observes a broad distinction between the gracious and propitious forms (*anugraha mūrti*) and the dreaded destructive forms (*samhara murti*)

Viṣṇu likewise takes on an increasingly complex form by the accretion of new features His solar associations begin from the Veda and his *cakra* (discus) is said, in later mythology, to have been shaped out of the sun His celebrated three steps, of which two traverse the earth and are visible to men but the third and highest is beyond the flight of birds and the ken of mortals, are generally held to refer to the course of the Sun Viṣṇu is the friend of Indra whom he frequently aids in the fight with Vṛtra and in vanquishing demons But this does not stand in the way of his being identified with Vasudeva-Kṛṣṇa whose opposition to Indra is well marked in many puranic legends There is a further growth of Kṛṣṇa legends when he is endowed with the features of a 'cowherd god' (Gopāla Kṛṣṇa) and many new stories are evolved of his pranks and adventures as a child or young boy The *Mahabharata* which in different contexts reviews the whole gamut of Kṛṣṇa's achievements is a much more human document than the *Ramayana* which has been not inaptly described as a 'polished fantasia' The Great Epic and its supplement the *Harivamśa* create a strong impression in the mind that behind all the distortions and exaggerations of legend, there must lie a genuine historic core though it is risky to attempt to separate it from the overgrowth, we also get the feeling that many of the details of the legends bear an unmistakable local colour and may well be pre-Aryan in origin The *Bhagavad-Gīta* inseparably associated with Krsna s name is a landmark in the history of Hindu thought, it not only preaches with a new emphasis the religion of devotion and duty, but adumbrates the theory of *avataras* (epiphanies) which shows Visnu as the watchful guardian of the universe ever intent upon rescuing it from disaster whenever its existence is threatened But when we look into the details of the *avataras*, we find surprisingly enough that many of them stem from the Veda the Rigveda itself in one instance—the Boar incarnation[5] Two other *avataras* can be traced to the Brahmanas, though not yet connected with Visnu 'The fish which in the *Satapatha Brahmana* delivers Manu from the flood appears in the *Mahabharata* as a form of Prajapati becoming in the Puranas an incarnation of Visnu In the same Brahmana Prajapati about to create offspring becomes a tortoise moving in the primeval waters In the Puranas this tortoise is an Avatara of Visnu who assumes this form to recover various objects lost in the deluge' Rama the Prince of Ayodhya, and Krsna are, of course the best known of

[5] Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* p 41

the *avataras* whose sagas constitute no small part of Hindu culture wherever it has spread The diversity of the sources of the *avataras* shows the extreme difficulty of identifying the Aryan warp and the pre-Aryan woof in the fabric of Indian culture

We may now mention one further instance of syncretism of particular import to students of South India That is the identification of Skanda Kumara, or Karttikeya with Murug(k)an, also called Velan and Subrahmanya of the Tamils In the North he is regarded as the son of Śiva and Parvatī, and Kalidasa's poem *Kumarasambhava* (Birth of Kumara) is based on the legend that Śiva gave up his penance as Mahāyogi, and wedded Parvatī to procreate a war-leader under whom the divine hosts could overthrow the defiant and oppressive Asura (demon) by name Taraka, hence his names Senanī and Mahasena Another stream of legend embellishes the story saying that Śiva emitted his sperm in Fire (Agni) who passed it on to Ganga where it matured into Skanda in a forest of rushes, whence his name (Śaravanabhava), the child was then brought up by the six stars of the Krttikas or Pleiades, who nursed him by his six heads whence his names Sanmukha (six-faced) and Sanmatura (six-mothered)

Another form of the story makes him the son of Agni and his wife Svāhā who assumed the forms of the wives of six Risis whom Agni loved In some coins of Kaniṣka there are four figures with names subscribed in Greek as Skando, Mahāseno Komaro and Bizago, they seem to have been regarded as separate deities even as Patañjali seems to have regarded Skanda and Visakha as separate deities But in course of time they were all identified with one another, and in South India with the transparently indigenous Tamil deity known as Murugan or Velan While the entire mythology of Karttikeya Skanda of the North is fully accepted in the Tamil country, there exist other traits peculiarly Tamil in origin The name Murugan, however is an exact rendering of Kumara (Youth), for *murugu*, a word of unknown affiliation in Tamil, also means tenderness, youth The other term *Velan* means the god with the spear (*vel*), the most characteristic weapon of this deity He has a cock on his banner, and is believed to be fond of sporting on hill tops One of his wives (*Valli*) is from the hill tribe of the Kuṛavas The undoubted antiquity of his cult among the Tamils is attested by the discovery at the pre-historic urn field at Adiccanallūr of bronze cocks, iron spears and mouthpieces of gold leaf similar to those employed by modern worshippers of Muruga when they

are on a pilgrimage carrying the *Kāvadi*[6] in fulfilment of a vow. The oldest stratum of Tamil literature mentions a *Vēlan-adal*, an ecstatic dance by a priest possessed by Velan The Murugan cult never lost its popularity in the Tamil country, witness the stirring hymns of the *Tiruppugal* of Arunagiri-nātha (15th century), and may be said to be experiencing a notable revival under the leadership of one of the leading Brahmin advocates of Madras who has earned the title of *Tiruppugal-mani* by his musical renderings of the celebrated hymns of Arunagiri-natha

The instances of syncretism cited so far are just a few leading examples of a large class of facts of the religious history of India, the systematic treatment of which would, in itself, require a good sized volume While these mutual approaches and adjustments were occurring in the sphere of the Great Tradition, the more popular cults continued everywhere more or less in the same old way, though not altogether uninfluenced by the developments in and the spread of the Great Tradition The details of the Little Tradition can be gathered by a study of the contemporary villages of India Such a study discloses altogether a new world of village gods and goddesses, genii of sorts including Yakṣas, Yakṣis, Gandharvas, Kumbhandas, Nagas, Bhutas, rivers, trees and mountains — all being honoured and worshipped in different ways which differ widely according to time and place It is quite possible that some of these village deities are local adaptations of borrowals from the Great Tradition which has its own godlings, but in the main they date from pre-Aryan times and were, in origin, probably Dravidian in the South, and Dravidian, Kirata or Niṣāda in the North The dominant note in the worship of village deities is one of fear, an element not altogether unknown, as we have seen in Vedic religion such as, for instance, in the prayers to ward off the results of Rudra's rage The village deities, and the majority of them are goddesses, inflict or ward off diseases and calamities, and the rituals of their worship are crude and in the past involved much drunkenness and even immorality Here is a brief account from a work of the last century 'The sacrifice of fowl, sheep and buffaloes is normal, and the blood of the sacrificial victim is sometimes drunk, or applied to the forehead and breast of the worshippers sprinkled on the lintel and doorsteps of the shrine, or mixed with rice and scattered over the fields, streets and bounds of the village The

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[6] The *Tamil Lexicon* defines *Kāvaḍi* as 'a decorated pole of wood with an arch over it carried on shoulders with offerings mostly for Muruga's temple, commonly with some parade'

eating of the flesh of the victim is also held sometimes to be part of the sacrifice In a buffalo sacrifice, the animal is paraded through the village with a garland round its neck, and after the sacrifice, its head is cut off and its foreleg is put in its mouth, the nose is smeared with fat and a lighted lamp is put on its forehead' It is impossible to explain the significance of all these details and many others not mentioned here that constitute perhaps the sum of accretions through the ages from many diverse sources And in one way or other such rituals mark the practice of popular religion in all the villages not only in South India, but in the entire sub-continent There were two attempts to explain these features, both made about the middle of the second decade of the twentieth century Bishop Whitehead lived many years in Madras, and though he looked upon Indian villages and their inhabitants primarily as potential recruits to the Christian faith, his knowledge of rural institutions was deep, and his views are entitled to respect He thought that a primitive Animism succeeded by Totemism in a later nomadic stage explained much, if not the whole, of the practices he described The ideas of blood relationship among clansmen, and the unity of their brotherhood to be extended, whenever possible 'by alliances with other clans — each clan with its own animal totem, and the transition from a nomadic to the more settled life of an agricultural community, were put forward by him As agriculture in early ages all the world over was the work of women, the preponderance of the female element among village deities is easy to understand To this he also traced the practice of the *pujari* (worshipping priest) occasionally dressing himself as a woman, sitting in a cart with the animal impaled alive, and being dragged in procession through the village Above all he held that the animal sacrifice as practised in the village was not so much a propitiatory gift to the deity, as born of a desire for communion with the totem spirit The killing of the totem animal which would normally be regarded as the murder of a kinsman became on the occasion of a solemn sacrifice a ritual act conducing to the strength of those who partake in the sacrifice and the blood and flesh of the animal in different ways The liver and entrails were considered to be the seat of life, and so the pūjari put the liver in his mouth and the entrails round his neck The animal sacrificed was the representative of the spirit to be worshipped and so was honoured with garlands, turmeric and *kumkum* (saffron), and its feet washed with water before sacrifice

Very soon after, an American scholar, Elmore, criticized the

totemistic theory of the origin of the buffalo sacrifice The argument was that current stories suggest a historical origin for the rites and that the sacrifices symbolize 'the dire punishment and disgrace of a conquered enemy' The cutting off of the head, the putting the foreleg in the mouth, the smearing of the nose with fat, and the sticking of a lighted lamp upon the forehead are intended to express 'the supreme humiliation of a feared despised and defeated enemy' So too the procession of the buffalo with a garland round its neck through the village before the sacrifice was the 'remnant of a triumphal procession in which the enemy was exhibited before the disgraceful death' The sacrifice therefore represents the triumph of the Aryan invaders over the Dravidian aborigines and their 'mad gods'.

In the second edition of his book (1925) Bishop Whitehead rejected the whole of this argument as far fetched and improbable The argument if correct, compels us to assume that the buffalo sacrifice originated at a comparatively late date, and contradicts all we know of the origin and meaning of sacrifice and ritual *The stories relied on by Elmore obviously belong* to a time when the Pariahs originally a leading clan among the Dravidians, had been degraded under Brahman influence But the worship of *grāma devatas* (village deities) and buffalo sacrifice go much farther back, probably to the time when the Dravidians first came to India and settled down to an agricultural life, say 3000 to 4000 B C at the latest, so we cannot interpret them in the light of events that occurred 3000 years later Without committing ourselves to all the details of the arguments involved or to the chronology of Dravidian immigration suggested by Whitehead which few scholars will accept today, we may say generally that Whitehead has the better of the argument and that his approach seems to be nearer the true explanation of the surviving village rites in so far as they are pre-Aryan in their origin

Whitehead says further that his theory explains the origin of stones and images as objects of worship The totem animal was killed in order to shed the blood and thus secure the presence of the totem deity at a particular spot which then became sacred or Taboo to violate which would be a grievous offence Accordingly the spot was marked by a simple heap of stones, or an upright stone pillar which would perhaps be sprinkled with the blood Then Totemism gradually died out and gave place to higher religious ideas and anthropomorphic conceptions of the deity This brings us to the question of the origin and place of temples and temple worship in Hinduism but before we proceed

to consider it, we should notice two other interesting features of rural worship to which Whitehead refers

At Pullambadi a village in the Tiruchirāpalli District, the shrine of the goddess Kulanthalamman serves as a civil court for the determination of suits concerning civil debts The creditor wrote his complaint against the debtor on a palm-leaf and hung it on a spear in front of the image of the goddess, the debtor will contract illness if the claim is just and he does not pay up If he disputes the claim he may put in his counter statement on the same spear The deity then decides the truth between them and afflicts the perjurer with dreams and misfortunes till the false statement is withdrawn The debtor pays through the *pujari* and the temple takes a commission The settlements are usually finalized during the annual festival in April or May The temple says Whitehead got a commission of Rs 3 000 in the thirty years since the system was introduced Earlier, the creditors promised a part of the debt to the deity if she helped in the recovery of it, all transactions being oral 'This', adds Whitehead to the practical British mind seems the only really sensible ceremony connected with the worship of village deities in South India' One wonders if this simple method which depends altogether on the faith of the votaries still continues, or, if it does, will long continue under the impact of modern conditions

Whitehead also records a legend on the origin of two of the village-goddesses It is a distorted version of the well known Puranic story of Parasurama (Rama with the axe) cutting off the head of his mother Renuka at the behest of his father who suspected the purity of her devotion to him In this story the mother is called Mariyamma and her head is cut off along with that of a Pariah woman whom she had embraced for her sympathy Then when the father granted the boon of recovery Parasurama transferred the heads by mistake and the revived ladies became Mariamma (with Brahmin head and Pariah body) wanting goats and cocks but not buffaloes as sacrifice and Yellamma (Pariah head and Brahmin body) wanting buffaloes The former is usually regarded as the goddess of small pox and the name of the latter means 'lady of the boundary (*ella*)' 'The story', says Whitehead 'is an interesting one because it probably represents the fusion of the Aryan and Dravidian cults in the days when the Aryans first found their way into (South) India A Pariah body with a Brahmin head is an apt description of the cults of Siva while a Pariah head with a Brahman body might well describe some of the cults of the ancient Dravi-

dian deities, modified by Brahman ideas and influences The fact that the deity to whom the buffalo is offered was the one with the Pariah head shows that the buffalo sacrifice was specially characteristic of the old Dravidian religion, and suggests that the buffalo was the totem of the Pariahs' (116-7)

The rise of temples, temple worship, and images of deities is most probably rooted in pre- and non-Aryan forms of religion. The contrast between the rites of a Vedic sacrifice and of temple worship is striking and yet both hold an equally important place in historic Hinduism as we know it The Vedic sacrifice is a solemn and formal invocation of the heavenly powers accompanied by oblations in fire for their furthering the well being of the person who performs the sacrifice and those whom he represents, the worship in a temple closely imitates the daily routine in a royal palace, where the king's daily wants and needs are attended to with meticulous care from dawn to night by a whole host of servants and slaves, the deity, like the king, is roused from sleep with music in the morning and gets his wash, meal, sport and pastime through the day and is ultimately put to sleep in his bed room—everything being done with due pomp and ceremony and with suitable accompaniments The Vedic *Yagna* is conceived as part of the cosmic cycle calculated to maintain the rhythm *(rta)* of the universe by a mutual exchange between Heaven and Earth, the gods being sustained by the offerings in sacrifices and the men by the bounties (good seasons and harvests) they get in return from the gods The worship in a temple stems from a much simpler world of ideas about the relations between a ruler and his subjects, and in fact the whole ceremonial of such worship is generally summed up as *Sodaśarajopacara,* the sixteen attentions due to a king It is true that in relatively recent times another set of ideas probably of Mesopotamian origin gathered round the temple which came to be considered as the sacred mountain (Meru) at the centre of the world (universe) and served as the abode of the gods, a conception which accounts for the colossal *vimanas* of some of the Indian temples and such stupendous monuments as Bara Budur and Angkor Vat. But in the early period that witnessed the fusion of Aryan and pre-Aryan cultures in India the temple was perhaps just a sacred spot indicated by an enclosure, a tree or a stone heap or pillar, and had little to show of architecture or sculpture An early Tamil poem[7] contains a short description apparently reminiscent of pre-Aryan times, it says that Tuḍiyan,

[7] *Purananuru,* No 335

Pānan, Paṛaiyan and Kaḍamban are the only four castes (or races, *kuḍi*), and that there are no gods (*kaḍavuḷ*) to be praised (*paravu*) with offerings of paddy (unhusked rice) unless it be the stone commemorating the hero who fell in battle while opposing the enemy and his white tusked elephant Here is a clear hint that some at least of the deities worshipped by the common people had their origin in the apotheosis of local heroes That others arose from the cult of ancestors may be inferred from the practice that survived into late historical times of marking by a *linga* and sometimes also a small temple the sites where important persons, chieftains or saints, were buried or cremated, this class of temple is distinguished in the inscriptions of the Tamil country by the title *palli padai-koyil* The name *koyil* for the temple is of much semantic interest as it means both a temple and a palace, which were often erected side by side in historical times, the most conspicuous instances being furnished by the celebrated Cola capitals of Tanjore and Gangai-konda-Coḷapuram, the practice was followed by the monarchs of Vijayanagar also We notice the same feature in the Sanskrit word *Prasada*, also meaning both temple and palace Again, the word employed for worship in the citation made above from *Purananuru* is *paravu* i e, praise, same as *ṛc* (Rk) from which we get *arcana*, a common word for worship in later times Stress has been laid on the contrast between *yagna* (sacrifice) and *pūjā* (worship) and the suggestion made that the former is Vedic and Aryan, and the latter non-Vedic and pre-Aryan Accordingly, *puja*, in Tamil *pūśai*, is sought to be derived in one of two ways One method is to connect with the words *pu*, flower, and *śey*, do, i e, an act done with the aid of flowers, the other is to connect it with *pūśu* (smear), implying that the smearing of the object worshipped with the blood of the animal sacrificed in the act was its central feature We must observe however that the word *pusai* does not occur in early Tamil literature of the Sangam period and that the Tamil Lexicon does not notice either of these derivations for the words but simply refers to the Sanskrit word *puja* Worship in temples and the domestic worship of deities is repeatedly mentioned in the late Vedic literature of the Sutras Vedic religion was aniconic, and the objects that received worship from pre-Aryan peoples in India were trees and stones which were regarded as the abode of deities, good and bad and possibly some animals held sacred for one reason or another The beginnings of anthropomorphism can be traced to an interesting discussion by Yaska (c 600 B C) on the human attributes of Vedic deities and we may assume that

figural representation of gods became common thereafter, and a regular iconography began to develop The accretion of myths and legends drawn from various sources such as the elaboration of hints contained in the Vedas, the adaptation of local stories and traditions prevalent in different parts of the country, led on the one hand to an increasing volume of Purānic literature and on the other to a diversification of cults and deities each with its own particular iconic ideals enshrined in *dhyāna ślokas* (verses in aid of meditation) supposed to embody the visions vouchsafed to eminent seers who practised the particular cults These in turn gave rise to an extensive sculptural art in stone and metal, an art rich alike in aesthetic and symbolism which, with many changes, has survived to our own day We shall study these developments in some detail later

The whole of India including the extreme south had been Aryanized by the fourth century B C if not earlier, and a new Hindu Society marked by certain prominent traits constituted everywhere It was a pluralistic society which had found in the caste system the most expedient method of accommodating peoples professing differing faiths and following diverse practices, while ensuring the acceptance by all of a common idealogical framework The system is certainly open to attack from the standpoint of modern egalitarian democracy, and perhaps in the long run it tended to encourage narrower group loyalties to the detriment of the wider loyalty to the race or nation But equality even in the modern world is more often an ideal rather than a reality and no system ever realizes in their entirety all the merits and demerits that are its theoretical concomitants The Indian caste system is no exception In its actual working through the ages it was neither so good and perfect as the orthodox advocates of the theory of *varnasrama* think, nor so evil and degrading as its critics, particularly from among Christian missionaries, have been prone to depict How much of it grew out of the class-system (*varnas*) of the Indo-Aryan Society and how much was incorporated from pre-Aryan social institutions and practices will perhaps never be satisfactorily determined While in the rest of the Aryanized world the original class system showed no tendency to harden into more or less self sufficient and socially exclusive groups, in India not only did the classes develop into rigid castes which are mutually exclusive, particularly as regards marriage and eating together, but the principle of caste fissiparousness became so deep rooted that even the reformist attempts to abolish caste ended generally in the formation of new castes of such reformers Caste has invaded even the Islamic and

Christian sections of Indian society, and today, more than a decade after the attainment of political freedom, the leaders of the country who mind its unity find the need to inveigh against 'Casteism' But the roots of 'Casteism' still baffle understanding and analysis

The more admirable on this account was the success of the early founding fathers of Indo-Aryan society in inventing an idealogy which was accepted not only in all India, but to a large extent even in lands colonized by them outside India and which served as an effective bond of cultural unity The central idea was that of the autonomy of the individual soul, not only humans and superhumans but all live beings have souls, and the Jains postulate souls even for the inanimate world, the gradation of births is regulated by the individual's *Karma* (acts), and the individual can work his way up the scale by good deeds through many births until at last he transcends the cycle of births and his soul regains its pristine condition of freedom and happiness The processes by which the soul gets entangled in the cycle of births and then works out its release (*mokṣa*) are explained differently by different schools of philosophy, and the common people who follow each school, though they may not be adepts in its metaphysics, do not lack an inkling of the truth as their *ācaryas* (teachers) saw it, because even the routine of their daily life is replete with nuances answering to the particular metaphysic *Karma* and its consequences, together with the strong appeal to ethical conduct implicit in the theory, were almost universally accepted and actively held in the whole of Hindu India, Buddhists and Jains not excluded The only exception were the handful of *Carvakas* (Nihilists) who never commanded much influence in Indian society

The whole pattern of Hindu social thought and conduct was calculated to ensure a stable society on the basis of this metaphysic, a society in which each individual would find his or her place duly defined, a place in which there would be no lack of opportunity for working one's way up both here and hereafter The emphasis was more on duty than on right on order and the continuance of ancestral custom than on innovation and change The social order, particularly the Dharma (duty and function) of the *varnas* and the *asramas* (stages of life) was believed to be divinely ordained but the code was not inflexible and changes necessitated by time, place and circumstance, were effected by the example and consent of the élite of society, and this principle applied even to secular matters such as the regulation of industry, trade and the arts by the guilds or groups

concerned The state had no legislative power and was only law-guardian and not law-maker; its main task was to keep the ring and enable the units of society, territorial (village) or social (caste, guild), or institutional (temple, college), and so on to carry on their legitimate functions without hindrance from anti-social elements The actual multiplication of castes (*jāti*) was reconciled with the four *varnas* of divine ordinance by the theory of mixed castes (*varnasankara*), worked out in much detail in textbooks, but bearing little relation to the facts of life, but the books were consulted at times to decide practical issues, and foreign immigrants were given a place in Hindu society if they desired entry by being regarded as *Kṣatriyas* of sorts

All the important stages in the life-cycle from conception to cremation had their appropriate ceremonies and rituals, which were marked by endless variations in detail according to locality and group These ceremonies (*samskaras*) were believed to be purificatory and calculated to fit the individual for the higher life The words Dharma and Karma covered the whole gamut of duties, individual and social, and the entire round of ceremonies, but the details of their content were by no means rigid, and could always be adapted to circumstances under the guidance of the accepted leaders of society at the time The concepts of *rnatraya* (three debts) and *puruṣarthas* (the objectives of human endeavour) may be taken to complete the basic ideas of Hindu society A man is believed to be born with three debts and he is expected to discharge them duly in the course of his life, *first* is what he owes to his parents and ancestors who gave him birth, this he repays by procreating children in lawful wedlock to continue his line, *second* is what he owes to the *rsis* (seers), the founders of the culture and organizers of social life, whom he satisfied by *vidya* (education), i e, by becoming an adept in the traditional learning and the arts, and if possible contributing to their development, at any rate securing their being handed down intact to future generations, and *lastly* what he owes to the gods — the good seasons and harvests, of which he ensures the continuance by sacrifices, daily and occasional The aims of life were categorized as four *dharma* (sufficiently explained already), *artha* (Goods) — pursuit of wealth material good in general, *kama* (Love) — sex life, the foundation of the family, and *lastly, mokṣa,* liberation from the cycle of births These aims were linked to the *aśramas* *dharma* was to be pursued constantly, *moksa* was to be prepared for by proper education during the first stage (*Brahmacarya* — stage of scholar), *artha* and *kama* in the second stage that of *grhastha* householder, and

mokṣa in the evening of life when he developed detachment from mundane preoccupations in two stages—*vanaprastha*, forest dweller (when his wife could keep him company), and *sanyasī* (anchorite) The stage of *grhastha* was considered most important socially as persons in all the other stages of life depended on householders for their sustenance Family life including the earning of wealth and its enjoyment (*artha* and *kāma*) was thus enjoined as essential duty, and this perhaps needs to be stressed a little in view of the not uncommon misreading of the Hindu outlook on life which attributes to it an undue concentration on the other world to the negation of this one In fact the celebrated Tamil classic, the *Kural* concerns itself only with the first three objectives of human life—*Aram* (Dharma), *Porul* (Artha), and *Inbam* (Kama)—and omits all reference to *Moksa* (liberation) Even in the North the Trivarga (three ends) were long treated as the norm, and *Moksa* got entry into the group only relatively late The *Weltanschauung* thus briefly sketched had become universal in India several centuries before the Christian era, but conformity to it in detail was by no means strict or uniform The large classes of people who were new to Indo-Aryan society naturally retained many of their old ways and gradually adopted whatever they could of the new ones, and nowhere did they continue to be the same as before the contact with the new culture This process of 'Aryanization' or 'Sanskritization' as it has been recently designated is still going on among the backward tribes in the hills and forests of India The state of religion and society that resulted from the mingling of cultures is reflected in a few early inscriptions and more fully, particularly for the Tamil country in the literature of the Śangam period, and this may be taken to furnish the starting point for our study of the subsequent religious movements in the region

In the Deccan Buddhism was well established by the third century B C and continued to flourish throughout the Satavahana period, indeed the first two centuries of the Christian era constitute the most glorious epoch of Buddhism in the Deccan The stupa of Amaravati was enlarged and embellished many new but smaller *stupas* came up in many spots in the Kṛṣna Valley, and many new caityas and viharas were excavated from rock in the Western Ghats to the north of Poona and elsewhere The contemporary inscriptions mention the names of a number of sects and of monks of various grades of learning and eminence engaged in preaching the Law of the Master to the faithful *Stupas*, the sacred tree, the footprints of the master, the *trisula*

(trident) emblem representing the three jewels (*triratna*) of Buddhism, viz, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha (congregation of monks), the *dharmacakra* (Wheel of Law), relics and statues of the Buddha and other great teachers, Yakṣas, Yakṣis and Nāgarajas (spirits and godlings) were all objects of worship The sculptures of this period show men and women in states of ecstatic devotion rather than merely kneeling or perhaps prostrating themselves with joined hands before the objects of their devotion

Buddhism, however, did not by any means displace Brahmanical Hinduism to which adhered most of the Sātavahana rulers (c 200 B C-250 A D) The third king of the line performed a number of Vedic sacrifices and even named one of his sons Vedisrī (the glory of the altar) King Hala's *Saptasati*, a Prakrit anthology, opens with a passage in adoration of Śiva Another king *Gautamiputra Śatakarni* was a great supporter of Brahmans, and is said to have emulated the examples of the epic heroes Rama, Keśava (i e Kṛsna) and Arjuna The pantheon of Hinduism included Indra, Vasudeva, the Sun and the Moon, Śiva, Visnu, Krsna, Ganeśa, and Pasupati Temples of Gaurī, the consort of Śiva, are mentioned in *Saptasatī* as also the obscure Vrata (vow) of fire and water

The fusion of cultures is seen much more clearly farther South and we may take a broad view of the conditions not confined only to the sphere of religion The stories of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were well known to the early Tamil poets and they refer frequently to episodes from these epics Each of the three 'Crowned Kings' (*mudi-arasar*) of the Tamil country, Cera, Pandya and Coḷa claims to have fed the opposing forces on the eve of the Great Battle in Kurukṣetra Among the myths and conventions of Northern Sanskritic origin that had already entered Tamil literature may be noted the destruction of the three cities (Tripura) of the Asuras by Śiva, King Śibi giving away his flesh to save the dove from the Vulture, Uttara-Kuru as the land of perpetual enjoyment, Arundhati as the ideal of conjugal fidelity, the concept of *rnatraya*, and the beliefs that the Cakora bird feeds only on rain drops, and that raindrops turn into pearls in particular conditions The *Tolkappiyam* grammar is avowedly modelled on the Sanskrit grammar of the Aindra school The eight kinds of marriage mentioned in the Dharmasūtras are known and the *gandharva* form is equated to the *kalavu* (secret meetings between a young man and a maiden unknown to their parents), an originally Tamil convention Many popular beliefs and customs mentioned in literature seem

to be blends of the North and South. A woman with dishevelled hair was a bad omen. Fortune tellers plied a busy trade and so did astrologers. Children were provided with amulets for warding off evil, and the five weapons (*aimbadai*) of Visnu figured prominently among them. Rites were practised to avert the mischief of demons (*pey*), to bring rain, and produce other desired results Crows were believed to announce the arrival of guests by their cawing, and particularly the return of the absent husband to his lonely wife, and were fed regularly in front of royal palaces, and perhaps also of every household. The practice of escorting a departing guest to some distance was observed by Karikāla, the Coḷa king, who took 'seven steps' (*saptapadī*, a conventional number) with his guest before requesting him to mount a chariot drawn by four milkwhite steeds The slaughter of a cow, the destruction of a foetus, and the killing of a Brahmin were accounted heinous offences, but ingratitude was held to be even worse

No single method was adopted for the disposal of the dead, both cremation and inhumation with or without urns are freely mentioned. A widow offered a rice ball (*pinda*) to her dead husband on a bed of *darbha* grass, and the *pulaiyan* (a man of a caste lower than the *pariah*) had a part to play in this funeral ritual. *Satī* was fairly common, though by no means universal The perfect wife was held to be one who, at the death of her husband, entered the burning pyre as if she were entering a cool tank for a bath

Vedic religion had struck root, and monarchs performed costly sacrifices Brahmins devoted to their studies and religious duties held a high position in society. The followers of the Veda had often to engage in public disputations with rival sectarians, and many are the references to such disputations proclaimed by the flying of flags and carried on with much gesticulation of the hands' The rival sects are not named, but doubtless they were Jainism and Buddhism which became more prominent in the succeeding age From all accounts Hinduism was the dominant faith The worship of Murugan (Subrahmanya) and the legendary achievements of that deity are often mentioned Śiva, Balarama, Visnu, Krṣna, Ardhanārīsvara (the hermaphrodite form of Śiva), and Anantasayī (Viṣnu lying on the serpant couch in the ocean of milk) had temples dedicated to them The details of Viṣnu worship with *tulasi* (basil) and bell are set forth in the *Padirrupattu* (Ten Tens) and *Paripadal* and the custom of people starving in the temple to invoke the grace of the god is mentioned Women went with their children in the evenings for

worship in the temples The worship of Murugan was of ancient origin and embodied some indigenous features like *Vēlan-adal* an ecstatic dance in his honour Indra came in for special worship in an annual festival held in Puhār (Kaveripatnam), the Cola port town and the story is told that the omission to celebrate the festival brought about the destruction of the city by a tidal wave Asceticism was honoured and *tridandi* (triple staff) ascetics are particularly mentioned There was in vogue a conventional classification of the landscape of the Tamil country into five regions each being presided over by its special deity, thus Mullai (forest land) had Māyon (Visnu) for its deity, Kurinji (mountain country) had Seyon (Murugan), Marudam (wet land) had Vendan (King of the Gods Indra), Neydal (sea coast) had Varuna, and lastly Palai (desert land) had a goddess Korravai (lit. goddess of victory or heroism identified with Śiva's consort Parvati) Here we have another conspicuous example of the blend of Aryan and pre Aryan concepts resulting in a new complex partaking of the features of both.

III BHAKTI MOVEMENTS IN THE SOUTH

The next epoch in the history of South Indian religions is the growth of an intense theism marked by a fervid devotion (*bhakti*) to a personal god which found expression in numerous popular devotional hymns; these hymns were collected and edited in a canonical form at a later time, and continue to be regarded as among the most precious treasures in the heritage of the country. The period of this development may be said to have lasted from the sixth century to about the end of the eighth century A.D. It was heralded by notable changes in the political map. The Satavahana power came to an end in the third century and the break up of their empire led, as often in the history of India, to the rise of a number of smaller kingdoms in the different parts of the Deccan — the Ābhiras and Traikuṭakas in the north-west, the Cuṭus followed by the Kadambas in the south-west, the Gangas to the east of them, the Pallavas in the south-east, and the Iksvākus and others in the coastal Andhra country. What happened in the Tamil country is not clearly known. The close of the Sangam age which may have lasted well into the fifth century A.D. was followed by a dark period of well over a century. A Paṇḍyan copper plate charter of the ninth century A.D., the Vēlvikuḍi grant, mentions that during this dark period, perhaps towards its close, there occurred a political revolution as a result of which several kings lost their thrones, religious endowments were abrogated, and much disorder and oppression ensued. This revolution was the work of the Kalabhras, a tribe or dynasty of obscure origin. From the contemporary Buddhist Pāli works of Buddhadatta we hear of a certain Accuta-Vikkanta (Acyuta-Vikranta in Sanskrit) of the Kalabbhakula (Kalabhrakula, Skt.) during whose reign Buddhist monasteries were built and Buddhist writers enjoyed considerable patronage in the Cola country. Much later Tamil literary tradition avers that Accuta captured and imprisoned the three 'Crowned rulers' of the Tamil land — the Cera, Coḷa and Pāṇḍya, and some songs about him are quoted by Amitasāgara, a Jain grammarian of Tamil in the tenth century A.D. Possibly

Accuta was himself a Buddhist, and the political revolution which the Kalabhras effected may have been provoked by religious antagonism The Colas virtually disappeared from the Tamil land as a power in this debacle, a branch migrated to the Telugu country and became celebrated as Telugu Colas from the seventh to the tenth century and beyond, the main Tamil dynasty lived obscurely in Uraiyur in the neighbourhood of Trichinopoly, occasionally furnishing brides for the princes of neighbouring kingdoms The duration of Kalabhra rule and the extent of territory that passed under their sway cannot be determined, but it is clear that under them Buddhism (and possibly Jainism) also made great progress among the Tamils All references to this period in later Tamil literature, particularly in the poetical classic of Tamil hagiology, the *Periya Purānam* of Śekkilar, are loaded with a deep sense of the danger of the overthrow of orthodox Hinduism by the rising tide of Buddhistic and Jaina heresy

Three kingdoms rose into prominence in the latter half of the sixth century, the Calukyas of Badami to the north of the Tungabhadrā the Pandyas in the extreme south and the Pallavas in the country in between And the first rulers of all these kingdoms claim to have overthrown the Kalabhras, among others, before establishing their sway The Calukyas who make their appearance for the first time in the middle of the sixth century soon succeeded in reuniting the Deccan under one State though a little later the subordinate Viceroyalties of Lata (South Gujarat) and Vengī (Coastal Andhra) ruled by princes of the blood royal developed into virtually independent kingdoms Farther south the Pallavas and the Pandyas kept up a more or less constant war and the Pallavas had to fight on two fronts against the *Calukyas in the north and the Pandyas in the south naturally* also the Calukyas and Pandyas sometimes joined hands against their common enemy in the middle These political alignments were as we shall see sometimes reflected in the religious practices of the different states

The Bhakti cult had its origin in the North It is primarily associated with Krsna Vasudeva identified with Visnu Narayana and Purusottama A Krsna is known as the composer of a Vedic hymn (RV viii 74) and he is called an Āngirasa in the Vedic Index (*Anukra mani*) There is also a Krsna Devakiputra who figures as the pupil of Ghora Āngirasa in one of the early upanisads (*Chhandogya iii 17 6*) *dating from a time not later* than the seventh century B C Legends of early date are found, and these represent Kṛṣna as a hero not yet divine, though well on the road to becoming so About the same time or a

little later the grammarian Panini writes of Vasudeva and Arjuna (IV 3 98) as objects of worship—being Kṣatriya heroes perhaps regarded as semi divine Magasthenes (*c* 320 B C) the Macedonian ambassador at the Mauryan Court evinces knowledge of Kṛṣna whom he calls Herakles and the places associated with his cycle of legends he says that Herakles was worshipped by the Saurasenoi (Śurasenas) in whose land are two great cities Mathura (now Muttra) and Kleisobora (Krsna pura(?) unidentified) and through this land flows the river Jobares (Yamuna Jamna of the maps) Epigraphical references from Central India mark the further stages in the growth of the cult About 200 B C an inscription from Ghasundi in Rajputana records the building of a stone wall round the hall of worship of Sankarsana and Vasudeva Vasudeva is of course Krsna Sankarṣana is the name of his brother Balarama Pradyumna was Krṣna s son and Aniruddha one of his grandsons It is probable says Farquhar that these three were local divinities that an arrangement was made to bring them into relation with Krsna so as to form a combined sect and that the doctrine of the (four) Vyuhas (expansions or manifestation) is a theologism created to give them a permanent place in the teaching and worship of the community of Satvatas Pancaratas or Bhagavatas as they were variously called In its final form the doctrine of Vyuhas held that Vasudeva Sankarṣana Pradyumna and Aniruddha were the manifestations of Purusottama The Besnagar inscription (100 B C) records the erection of a Garuḍa Dhvaja (i e a Pillar topped by Garuda the mount of Visnu) of Vasudeva by the Bhagavata Heliodorus of Taxila an ambassador from King Antialkidas to King Kasiputra Bhagabhadra The *Mahabhasya* of Patanjali (150 B C) mentions the followers of Vāsudeva associates Krṣna closely with Sankarṣana and speaks of dramatic representations of the story of Krsna especially the binding of Bali and the slaying of Kamsa An inscription from the Nanaghat Cave (100 B C) associates Sankarṣana with Vasudeva The later parts of the Great Epic (*Mahabharata*) the Atharva Upaṇisads and some Puranas agree with the *Bhagavadgita* in regarding Kṛṣna Vasudeva as supreme

The rise and spread of the Bhagavata cult has been the subject of much learned discussion We need not review the discussions here but with due reserve accept that Kṛṣna the son of Vasudeva and Devaki was in truth a Kṣatriya warrior and diplomat who played a prominent part in the events recorded in the *Mahābharata* He had his education at the time which witnessed the rather widespread and speculative reaction against

an overgrown sacerdotalism, and in this reaction which is the core of the upaniṣadic thought, Kṣatriyas had an important, if not the leading, role Kṛṣna was initiated into the mystical and moral teaching of the time by his preceptor Ghora Angirasa, a worshipper of the sun, from whom he learnt 'those lessons of the meaning of sacrifice, the merit of virtue, and the importance of last thoughts, which reappear in the *Bhagavadgīta*, and which we may suppose to have been preserved for centuries as the sacred heritage of the Bhagavata sect' (Hill). We know little more of Kṛṣna, the story of his overthrow of the tyrant Kamsa may have a historical foundation; the rest including the legends of his childhood is 'unworthy myth'. Kṛṣna perhaps taught the worship of the Sun to his followers, but they, like the Buddhists and the Jains, soon turned their worship to their teacher himself Vāsudeva worship was still intimately connected with that of the Sun, and this patronymic name was preferred in the sect as more *significant of the "radiant lord of Heaven" than ever could be* the name of Kṛṣna "the black" (Hill) Kṛṣna however, was still demi god and not Supreme Deity in the days of Panini who couples his name with that of Arjuna as objects of devotion The district of Mathurā was the centre of the cult, and Vasudeva was revered here much as Herakles was among the Greeks Vāsudeva's position as Supreme God is proclaimed in the Heliodorus inscription which calls him *devadeva*, and this is also reflected in the attitude of Patañjali which marks a distinct advance on that of Panini The supremacy of Kṛṣna-Vāsudeva was not, however, accepted by all, and there are indications both in the Bhagavadgita and in the rest of the Mahabharata 'that there were some who would subordinate him to Śiva and revile him and cast aspersions on his character' Moreover the comprehensive tolerance of the new cult of devotion to a personal God which admitted all and sundry within its fold on a basis of spiritual equality must have been unacceptable to some Brahmans who noted the threat to their own proud status and to the tradition of caste that the new movement involved The doctrine of avatara which makes a rather sudden appearance in the *Bhagavadgita* was 'the necessary corollary to the identification of Kṛṣna with the supreme Here was Kṛṣna in human form, *Arjuna's charioteer at Kurukṣetra, if he was at the same time* highest God the paradox could be explained only by the theory of "descent" God had taken earthly forms in earlier days for the benefit of Gods and men, Kṛṣna was then the last and greatest of a series of descents' (Hill)

The Nanaghat inscription mentions only Vasudeva and

Sankarsana, and the suggestion has been made that the doctrine of Vyūhas was still in its early formative stages, this may well be so, for the Vyūhas are not known to the Gītā. So the *bhakti* cult must be taken to have entered the Deccan at a relatively early stage in its history. Another side of the bhakti movement of which we have rather less knowledge is that relating to the worshippers of Śiva Patañjali in his *Mahābhāsya* speaks of Śivabhāgavatas, who worshipped Śiva as the Bhagvat and carried an iron lance in the hand as the emblem of the deity they worshipped The doctrines of this school formed the Paśupata system founded by Lakulīśa or Nakulīśa perhaps in the early centuries B C 'The fact that his rise has been represented by the Purānas to be contemporaneous with Vāsudeva-Krsna points to the inference that traditionally the system was intended to take the same place in the Rudra-Śiva cult that the Pāñcarātra did in the Vāsudeva-Krsna cult We may therefore, place the rise of the Pāśupata school ... about a century after that of the Pāñcarātra system, i e, about the second century B C' (Bhandarkar)

We have lost the historical link between the early *bhakti* movement of the North of which we have just traced the outline and the movement in the Tamil country that began most probably in the sixth century A D and continued to flourish with some force till the ninth century. We may assume, however, that the southern movement was in some way inspired by the northern example. The movement had two wings — one Śaiva and the other Vaiṣnava They were contemporary and cooperative and had many close resemblances They have both left a precious heritage of popular hymns of high literary quality marked at times by great philosophical insight and always reflecting the spiritual exaltation experienced by the hymnists as they stood worshipping in the shrines of their favourite deities They have also left a considerable body of legendary history purporting to narrate the life histories of the saints and gathered together in canonical collections by their followers of a later age, say about the twelfth or thirteenth century A D As already noted, this hagiology is replete with the sense of a great danger to the orthodox faiths from the spread of the heretical creeds of Buddhism and Jainism These creeds offended the Hindu sense of religious decency in two ways, they denied the authority of the revealed word, the Veda; they also denied God, Buddhism denied the existence of the soul also, though in this respect Jainism parted company with it. These creeds had come into the Tamil country well before the Christian era and had more or less peacefully co-

existed with the orthodox religious faiths and practices for quite a number of centuries We have seen however, that these creeds, Buddhism in particular, seem to have gained an accession of political power with the advent of Kaḷabhra rule, and it is possible that this power was employed to promote actively the non-Vedic creeds at the expense of the Vedic We have no *direct evidence to judge the intensity of the danger to orthodoxy* The only evidence on the subject is the *Mattavilasa*, a farce (*prahasana*, lit, play of laughter) by the Pallava King Mahendravarman (c 620 A D) Far from reflecting an atmosphere of intense sectarian rivalry, the play introduces us to an easy going tolerance of foibles and turns the laugh against the *Kapalikas* (a class of extreme Śiva worshippers) as much as against Buddhist monks (bhikṣus) But then the play is a farce, and its author a versatile curious minded (*vicitra-citta*) monarch who may have meant the play as an essay in religious reform We shall see that there is some reason to think that Mahendravarman was himself caught in the religious rivalries of his time

If we may trust the indications from later legend this was a period of great stir There came up a succession of great leaders among the worshippers of Śiva and Viṣṇu the former known collectively as Nayanars (leaders) and the latter as Alvārs (divers into the Divine) They evolved a new type of *bhakti*, a fervid emotional surrender to God which found in due course its supreme literary expression in the *Bhagavata purana* (tenth century), a *bhakti* very different from the calm dignified devotion of the Bhagavatas of the early centuries before and after Christ in Northern India An outspoken hatred of Buddhists and Jains which finds expression in almost every one of the hymns was among the chief characteristics of the new epoch According to the canonical works mentioned above the rivalry between the orthodox and heretical sects exhibited itself in challenges to public debate with the condition that the vanquished party should give up his creed and adopt that of the victor, competition in the performance of miracles on similar terms and tests of the truth of respective doctrines by means of ordeals Parties of devotees under the leadership of one gifted saint or another traversed the country many times over singing dancing and debating all the way This great wave of devotional enthusiasm attained its peak in the seventh century and had not spent itself in the midst of the ninth. This indeed was the golden age of Hindu Revival in South India The shrines visited by the saints and celebrated by them in song were deemed particularly sacred and princes nobles and merchants who wished

to build and endow temples generally chose them for their parti cular attention in subsequent times down to our own day

Later tradition has recognized the number of *nayanars* or *adiyars* devotees of Śiva as sixty three, most of them were individuals though occasionally a group of devotees was counted under one name The individual saints included a woman from Karaikal in Tanjore till recently a French possession a Pariah by name Nandan from Adanur also in the Kaveri valley and Siruttondar a general of the Pallava army who won distinction by carrying out the siege and destruction of the Calukya capit l Badami (7th century) Nandan s life much embellished is a popular opera today and forms the subject of *Katha kalaksepams*, oral expositions of legends with music and sometimes a minimum of acting But most prominent among them all were Three Great Hymnists (*Muvar*) whose songs form the *Devaram* (lit songs in praise of God) making up the first seven books out of the twelve in the entire Saiva Canon (*tirumurai*) The collec tion now comprises 795 hymns (Jnanasambandar 384 Tiru-navukkaraśu or Appar 311 and Sundaramurtti 100) they are however only the survivals of a much larger original whose number tradition with the usual exaggeration puts at 103 000 (16 000+49 000+38 000) The story is that the entire collec-tion had been written on palm leaves and stored in a vault behind the shrine of Naṭarāja at Cidambaram that when Nambi Andar Nambi the editor of the extant version opened the vault he found the palm leaves mostly eaten up by termites and was able to recover only a small fraction We may not believe this legend or the figures it gives but that not all hymns entered the canon as we have it was established when some years ago the Epigraphical Department discovered an entire hymn of Sam bandar engraved on the wall of a Śiva temple in the Tanjore District but not found in the printed collection The original song modes seem to have been lost irretrievably

First among the Devaram Trio was Tirunavukkaraśu (lit king of the holy tongue) also known as Appar He was a Vellala (peasant proprietor) from Tiruvamur gene-rally believed to have been a contemporary of the Pallava ruler Mahendravarman I Though born in an orthodox Saiva family he was attracted to Jainism in his early life and joined the monastery at Pataliputra (near Cuddalore in South Arcot) as a monk His elder sister Tilakavati who had watched his change of faith with untold regret implored Śiva s help Her prayer was answered Dharmasena that was her brother s ordination name became the victim of an abdomi

nal disorder and all his Jain companions could not help him Seeking his sister's aid he was cured by the grace of the God of *Tiruvadigai and so returned to the Śaiva faith* This defection greatly upset the monks of Pataliputra who trumped up false charges against Dharmasena and poisoned the mind of the Pallava king against him Appar was *subjected to many trials* and tortures which however, by the grace of Śiva caused him no hurt The king was convinced of the superiority of Śaivism and himself embraced it This king is generally identified with Mahendravarman mainly on the ground that the Śiva Temple at Tiruvadigai renovated by him bore the name Gunadhara-Iśvaram and Mahendra himself had a similar title Gunabhara It is quite possible that the title of the temple in Sekkilar's poem is a misreading of the title of the Pallava monarch There is a verse in the Trichinopoly inscription of Mahendravarman which furnishes clear proof that the king did indeed return to Saivism from some other creed which may well have been Jainism It must however be admitted that, as already hinted the tradition regarding *the persecution of Appar is hard to reconcile* with the spirit of the *Mattavilasa* The rest of Appar's long life of eighty-one years was spent in pilgrimages during which he *met many contemporary nayanars* of whom *Jnan sambandar* was the most notable indeed the greatest of them all

Jnanasambandar or Sambandar for short was a Brahmin of the Kaundinya *gotra* from Shiyali in the Tanjore District. There are few Śiva temples today in South India where worship is not offered to him As a child of three he is said to have got the milk of divine knowledge from Parvati (the consort of Śiva) herself and narrated the incident to his father then and there in song Realizing the divinity of his child the father carried him on his shoulders from one Śiva temple to another *until he was relieved by the present from the Gods of a pearl* palanquin for his son's use At that time the Pandya country was almost completely overrun by Jainism which had built a strong centre for its diffusion at Anaimalai (Elephant hill so called from its shape) within a few miles of the Pandyan capital of Madurai The Pandyan queen a Cola princess by name Mangaiyarkkarasi (Queen among women) and the minister Kulaccirai both staunch Śaivas sent a pressing invitation to Sambandar to come and retrieve the position The holy man went over to Madurai foiled all the nefarious conspiracies of the Jains against him vanquished them in debate and converted the king and his subjects to Śaivism The story goes that on this occasion 8 000 Jains were put to death by impalement and

a festival in the Madurai temple is supposed even now to commemorate the event every year This shocking legend can hardly be history Religious antagonism was sharp at the time, and impalement as a punishment of felons is attested by more or less contemporary sculptures and otherwise Still we can hardly believe that the intolerance of heresy on the part of the youthful and gentle saint — he did not live to be more than sixteen — descended to such cruel barbarities The story is doubtless the product of orthodox imagination of a later time animated by a false scale of values Sambandar had disputations also with Buddhists and visited many shrines which he praised in song He was the saintliest of the *Nayanars* and had no past to regret He may be placed in the middle of the seventh century or a little later and his Paṇḍyan contemporary was most probably Maṛavarman Avanisulamani

About a century after Sambandar came Sundaramurtti of Navalūr A child of poor Brahmin parents, he caught, by his physical charm, the attention of the local chieftain Narasinga Munaiyadaraiyan who, with the consent of the parents, interested himself in the child s education and bringing up When Sundaramurtti was about to marry a girl of his own caste, the marriage was stopped by the mysterious intervention of Śiva who claimed him as his slave A little later, Sundaramurtti fell in love with two young women one a Śudra girl of Tiruvorriyur (near Madras) and the other a dancing girl of Tiruvalur (Tanjore District) Their jealousies, it is said, could only be resolved by Śiva himself acting as a messenger to one of them Like the other Nayanars, Sundaramurtti is also credited with many miracles and the contemporary Cēra ruler, Ceramān Perumal was his friend They exchanged mutual visits regularly and made their last journey to the abode of Śiva in Mount Kailasa together, Sundara on a white elephant and Ceraman Parumal on a horse Sundara's devotion to Śiva was that of an intimate friend so that he was given the title Tambiran tolan (friend of God) The hymns of Sambandar, Appar and Sundara constitute, as already noted the *Devaram* and the first seven out of the twelve sections of the Tamil Śaiva canon They form a varied treasure house of religious experience which tells of mystical raptures and ecstasies of moments of light when there is a vision of God and the world is transfigured in the light of his love, and of periods of gloom when all is dark and the blind seeker is filled with a sense of fear They are read widely by Śaivas in the Tamil country even now and sung in temples by trained choristers on scheduled occasions

A little later than Sundara came the illustrious Mānikkavāsagar (one whose speech is ruby) Legend makes him the minister of a Pāndyan king, and on his account Śiva, the presiding deity of Madurai, is said to have performed many miracles His Pandyan contemporary was most probably Varaguna II (862-80 A D) Manikkavasagar is said to have debated with Buddhists from Ceylon at Cidambaram and to have utterly vanquished them His hymns constitute the *Tiruvasagam* (The sacred word) which forms the eighth section of the Tamil Śaiva canon Another work, *Tiruccirrambalak kovai*,[1] is also ascribed to him The *Tiruvaśagam* is the expression of confessions more outspoken and of a devotion more impassioned than those of the Devaram Trio, whose works were doubtless the source of his inspiration That he was an accomplished poet with a mastery of diction and metres is clear from the *Tiruvaśagam* He draws freely on the epics, Puranas and Āgamas and on the rich Tamil literature that had preceded him 'He knew also how to find poetry in local customs and homely stories, especially the mass of legends that illustrate Śiva s sacred sports Over all he threw the glamour of his genius' (Farquhar) He gives striking and frequent expression to his dislike for the vedanta by which we must, of course, understand the system of Śankara propounded not long before his time Manikkavasagar came after the tradition regarding the 'sixty three' saints (individuals and groups) of Tamil Śaivism had found their definitive formulation in the *Tiruttondattogai* (the collection of the sacred servants of God) of Sundaramurtti which became the accepted basis of all later literature on them

Manikkavaśagar's protest against advaita vedanta must be noted particularly because it represents the core of the *bhakti* cult The ultimate aim of the *bhakta* is not to lose his identity in the impersonal Absolute but to attain and enjoy for all time the blissful company of a personal God The attributes of God his relation to the universe he repeatedly creates protects and destroys and to the individual soul before and after its release from the cycle of births and deaths (samsara), are described differently by different schools of *bhakti*, but they are all agreed in maintaining the fundamental difference between God and the

[1] *Kovai literally means 'stringing', 'a set arrangement'* it is the name also applied to a variety of literary composition which treats successively the different stages in the development of the love of a young couple but suffused with an esoteric significance relating to the quest of the individual soul (the nayika heroine) for union with the absolute (nayaka, hero) The work under reference centres on Śiva as lord of Cidambaram

human soul and the eternal reality of both They do not subscribe to the identity of the universal soul with the individual soul which figures prominently in the *Mahavakyas* (key sentences) of the upanisads like *tat tvamasi* (That art Thou) and which forms the sheet anchor of *advaita* (non duality) as expounded by Sankara In this respect Manikkavasagar is the true representative of all the many different schools of *bhakti* which flourished in different regions and periods of India s long evolution

Some time between Sundaramurti and Manikkavasagar came the mysterious Tirumular whose *Tirumandiram* (the sacred *mantra*) forms the tenth section of the canon This is perhaps the earliest Tamil work that reflects the theology of the Agamas, it is a poem of 3 000 verses dealing with practical religion The life of Tirumular is wrapped in a fantastic legend A *siddha* from Kailasa the abode of Śiva migrated to the South to meet his friend Agastya near Tiruvaduturai he entered the dead body of a shepherd out of compassion for the herd which had just lost him he led the herd back home in the evening after which he abandoned the shepherd s family then as a penance he sat under a tree for 3 000 years composing the work at the rate of one verse a year The poem is obscure in many parts it is held in great veneration by Tamil Śaivas

The Vaisnava wing of the orthodox movement is represented by ten *alvars* for whom tradition has fabricated an impossible chronology Three of them form the earliest group They are Poygai Pudam and Pey born respectively in Kāñcīpuram Mamallapuram and Mylapore A beautiful legend tells how these three saints sought shelter from the rain in a narrow room which could just hold them standing when Viṣṇu himself sought their company they felt the pressure due to the presence of a new companion and recognizing his identity praised Him in song then and there The *bhakti* of these early saints of Tamil Vaiṣnavism is a gentle simple devotion altogether free from an intolerant sectarian outlook. This fact together with their use of the *Venba* metre in their songs points to a really early date for them — not later than the fifth or the sixth century A D

Then came Tirumalisai who takes his name from the village of his birth in the Chingleput district He may well have been an elder contemporary of the Pallava king Mahendravarman I and thus of Appar also Legend avers that at his birth he was a shapeless mass of flesh abandoned by his parents and brought up by a Śudra He practised Jainism Buddhism and Śaivism before finally settling down as a Vaiṣnava *yogi* His

poems exhibit a more controversial tone than those of his predecessors, and this was quite natural to his age After him came Tirumangai one of the most celebrated among the *alvars* He was a petty chieftain who ruled Ālinadu in Tanjore District He is reputed to have turned a highwayman in order to carry away and marry the daughter of a Vaisnava doctor of a higher caste, for whose sake he also changed his religion He is also said to have stolen from the vihara of Nagapattinam an image of the Buddha of solid gold to pay for the renovation of the temple of Ranganatha in Śrirangam — the most celebrated Vaisnava shrine in South India as it is often referred to as 'the temple' (*Koyil*) in Vaisnava parlance In his hymns which contain several historical references, he distinctly mentions the siege of Kañcipuram by Vairamegha i e, the first Rāṣṭrakuta king Dantidurga and this places him in the middle of the eighth century A D — a date which discredits the story of his friendly meeting with Jnānasambandar at Shiyali His hymns, the most numerous in the Canon are equally full of good poetry and attacks on Buddhism and Jainism To Śaivism on the whole he evinced a more friendly attitude as to a colleague cooperating in the war against heresy, and there are many resemblances in literary form and religious sentiments between Jnanasambandar and Tirumangai which may explain the rise of the beautiful though unhistorical legend of their meeting

A little later than Tirumangai, about the close of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century came Periyalvar, a Brahmin from Śrivilliputtur in the Tirunelveli district An untutored devotee originally known as Viṣnu citta (one whose mind was set on Visnu) he was enabled by the grace of God to establish the supremacy of Narayana in a religious disputation held in the court of the Pandyan king Śrimara Śrivallabha (815 862 A.D) and thereby appropriate to himself a large quantity of gold which the king offered as reward to the most successful disputant He became the foster father of Goda or Andal the only woman in the group though not counted an *ālvar*, whom he found as a baby in the flower garden he maintained to ensure a regular supply of flowers for his daily *pujā* The story is that Anḍal when she attained the age of discretion used to decorate herself with the flower garland her father had prepared for his god and admire her make up in a mirror, and then quietly restore the garland to its original place for her father to offer it to God One day the father happened to see what his daughter was doing, and so did not offer the garland soiled by use to the deity That night Viṣnucitta had a dream in which the God rebuked him for having withheld

the garland which was doubly dear to him on account of Āṇḍāḷ's use of it, and the devotee conformed thenceforth to the God's desire On this account Āṇḍāḷ came to be known as *Sūdik-kodutta-nāccıyār*, the lady who gave what was worn by her (in her hair) The celebrated emperor Kṛṣṇadeva Rāya of Vijayanagar made the story the theme of his well known Telugu work *Āmuktamālyade* or *Viṣṇucittīya*, one of the five great *kāvyas* (epic poems) in that language In her intense devotion to Viṣṇu, Āṇḍāḷ dreamt of her marriage with the God, and described her experience in a hymn which is sung to this day when a marriage takes place in a Tamil Vaiṣṇava household This mystical union was the only one she knew, and she was taken by her father to Śrīrangam where she entered the *garbhagṛha* (sanctum) of Ranganātha and disappeared, and her father was duly honoured as the father-in-law of the deity and then sent back to his native place Śrivilliputtūr The ardour of Āṇḍāḷ's devotion resembles that of Māṇikkavāśagar, and her hymns are replete with allusions to Kṛṣṇa stories

To about the same time belonged Tiruppāṇ, a minstrel of low caste, who was not permitted to enter the temple of Śrīrangam, and was thus the Vaiṣṇava counterpart of Nandan who had a similar experience in the Naṭarāja temple at Cidambaram, after worshipping their respective deities for many years, each in his way, from outside the precincts of the sacred shrines, they were both miraculously absorbed by the deities of their devotion There was also Toṇḍar-aḍi-ppoḍi (the dust of the feet of the devotees), a Brahmin from the Tanjore District, whose real name was Vipranārāyaṇā and whose intolerance of Buddhism and Jainism was nearly as great as that of Tirumangai Like Sundaramūrti, this *āḻvār* fell in love with a dancing girl, and found that the god of Śrīrangam did not disdain to smoothen the path of his love Kulaśekhara, a ruler of Kerala, proficient alike in Sanskrit and Tamil, was the next *āḻvār* who among other shrines of Viṣṇu, sang of that at Cidambaram, and after renouncing the throne, spent the last days of his life in Śrīrangam Lastly came the celebrated Nammāḻvār and his pupil Madhurakavi The former was born of a Vellāla family of Āḻvār-tirunagari, the sacred city of the *āḻvār*—apparently so called after him, originally known as Kurugūr, in the Tirunelveli District His personal name was Māṛan and he seems to have gained the title Saṭhakopa (hater of rogues) at his initiation He renounced the world in his thirty fifth year to practise *yoga* His hymns, the largest in number after those of Tirumangai, are rightly regarded as embodying the deepest religious experiences and

philosophic thought of one of the greatest seers of the world

Hiuan Tsang, who visited South India in 642 A D when the Hindu revival was just gathering momentum, did not notice the new movement, although in speaking of Mahārāṣṭra he mentions the worshippers of Deva (Śiva) who covered themselves with ashes He mentions with regret that Buddhism, his own creed, was on the wane, but remarks that it had yielded to Digambara Jainism The triumph of the revivalist movement was largely achieved in the two centuries that followed Public disputations which led kings and rulers to transfer their allegiance from one creed to another did much to bring this about More important, however, was the use of the popular speech by the *nāyanars* and the *ālvārs* in their soul-stirring compositions, and the fact that these poems were set to simple tunes which the masses loved to sing Not only did they thus constitute a precious heritage in literature and music, but they furnished numerous themes for dance and sculpture in temples and palaces Śiva burning the Tripura (three cities) of the Asuras, his destruction of Cupid (Kāma), his bestowal of the Pāśupata astra (arrow) on Arjuna, his forms as the great yogi and the great teacher (Dakṣiṇāmurti), his role as the cosmic dancer (Naṭarāja) were represented in superb sculptures in stone and bronze all over the land, the bronzes have largely disappeared, but the stone sculptures survive in varying states of preservation The Vaiṣṇava legends were equally important and gained equally artistic expression The *avatar* of Narasimha (Man lion) for the destruction of Hiranyakasipu was popular and often vigorously sculptured in stone Then came Kṛṣna's exploits and the incidents of the Ramayana The Pallava rock-cut maṇḍapas at Mamallapuram about forty miles to the south of Madras contain exquisite sculptures of Kṛṣṇa lifting the mountain Govardhana and sheltering the cattle and their keepers from the hail storm caused by Indra, of Durga fighting the *asura* Mahiṣa, and other scenes from the sacred mythology of Hinduism

ence to libertines, but this flies in the face of the plain meaning of the word and is obviously unhistorical linguistic ingenuity Likewise the *linga received more mystic interpretations as the* representation of the Absolute of monistic (advaita) Vedānta which had no form and no attributes with which is allied the Puranic legend that it is a pillar of fire of which the top and the base could not be discovered by Brahma who flew up as a bird and Viṣṇu who burrowed down below as a boar, this story received frequent sculptural representation in later times on the back walls of the sanctum in temples dedicated to Śiva While such facts deserve notice as marking stages in the later history of Hindu religious thought and practice they cannot command any relevance or validity in the explanation of the data relating to much earlier times

There are numerous references in early texts to shrines and temples of Yakṣas, the shrines were perhaps often no more than a sacred tree or a tree with an altar while the temples may have been structural buildings with images installed in them That these became centres of devotion (*bhakti*) becomes clear from the well known Yaksa statue from Pawaya (near Gwalior) in Central India which bears an inscription of the first century B C saying that the image (*pratima*) of Bhagavan Manibhadra was being established by the guild of the worshippers of Manibhadra (gauṣthya Manibhadra bhakta) The images of Yakṣas Nagas and Devatas sculptured on the railing of the *stupa* at Bharhut with their inscribed names also belong to the same stage of religious development or at least are reminiscent of it though on a Buddhist monument their decorative significance is greater than the religious import[1] Such facts go far to prove that the practice of making images and worshipping them was taken over by Indo Aryans from the earlier inhabitants of India and somehow *incorporated into the corpus of their religious beliefs and* practices The early Aryan aniconism continues to influence Buddhism also for quite a considerable time when Buddhist art refrained from any iconic representation of the Buddha but indicated his presence only by means of symbols like an empty throne under a tree a riderless horse and so on while they represented the many popular gods and goddesses iconically on *the same monuments as at Bharhut and Sānci But by the first* or second century A D the situation chances and the orthodox Brahminical deities like Śiva Vāsudeva and others begin to be represented by images in the same manner as the more popular

[1] See A K. Coomaraswamy *Yakṣas* Part I

folk deities 'In early Indian Art', says Coomaraswamy, 'so far as cult images are concerned, one iconographic type stands out predominant, that is the standing figure with the right hand raised, the left on the hip .. Of this type are the early images of Yakṣas and Yakṣīs whether independent or attendant . And it is also this type which provided the model for the cult images of other deities, such as Śiva or Buddha, when the necessities of Bhakti determined the appearance of all deities in visible forms'

Literary evidence points to an even earlier origin of the practice of making images and offering worship to them Pāṇini makes a clear reference to the *bhaktas* (devotees) of Vāsudeva, Arjuna, and the Mahārājas — i e the guardians of the four quarters, Kubera in the North, Dhrtarastra in the East, Vidūdhaka in the South and Virupākṣa in the West, he also mentions images which served as a means of livelihood without being sold And Patañjali s comment on this statement furnishes important data on the history of iconography. He says that the Mauryas wanted money (*hiranya*) and so set up images (*arcas*) , it is not clear whether they made money by selling them or merely exhibiting them and charging a fee from the spectators In any event, this works in with the statement in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* that in the centre of the capital city (pura) there should be erected temples dedicated to Aparājita, Apratihata, Jayanta, Vaijayanta, Śiva, Vaiśravana, Aśvins, and Śrī Madirā (Pārvati?) the Vastudevatas (guardians of the ground and structures) being set up in subsidiary shrines (*kosthakalaya*) Patañjali also mentions images of Śiva, Skanda and Viśakha made for worship Altogether we have here a rather miscellaneous assortment of deities, only some of them are vedic, others may be objects of popular veneration, some even perhaps Jainistic At any rate we are as yet far from the Purānic Hinduism of later times and its categorical and clear cut iconism with its rules prescribed by the Āgamas

Quintus Curtius states that an image of 'Hercules' was carried in front of Porus's army as it advanced against Alexander; this may well have been an image of Śiva or Krsna Besides the well known *Garuda-dhvaja* in honour of *devadeva* Vasudeva to which reference has already been made, there are other evidences of the existence of temples in which Samkarsana and Vāsudeva were worshipped in Rajputana and even in Western Deccan in the early centuries B C The words *pratimā* (image) and *arcā* (icon) occur in the Mora well inscription which refers to the stone images of the five heroes (*pancaviras*) of the Vrṣnis

who were worshipped as divinities[2] The devices on coins are of great interest to the study of the evolution of iconography An uninscribed tribal coin of the third century B C from Kausambi shows a Gaja Lakṣmī image — a standing Lakṣmī between two elephants engaged in pouring water over her from pots held in their trunks The same device occurs in many coins of later date including some of foreign rulers like Azilises Rajuvula and Śoḍasa Foucher thought that the figure represented the nativity of the Buddha The same motif occurs in sculpture on many monuments of the time in Central India Other coins exhibit Lakṣmī alone (without the elephants) seated on a full blown lotus or standing with a lotus in her hand The same figure on some Indo Greek coins has sometimes been wrongly described as a dancing-girl Like the Buddha being represented by symbols in early Buddhist art, Śiva seems to be represented just by a humped bull on some early coins and elsewhere The *linga* (phallus) and the trident with or without a pedestal or accompanying tree or trees are other emblems of Śiva that have been identified on tribal coins of the early centuries B C Śiva in his anthropomorphic form appears for the first time, appropriately enough in coins from Ujjain and its surroundings We have also six headed figures of Karttikeya on local issues of indigenous coins (e g Audumbara Yaudheya) and other three headed figures of Śiva on Kuṣana coins The former bear on the reverse representations of structural shrines with the trident or battle axe standards placed in front of them, these are doubtless meant to be Śiva temples containing either images of Śiva or *lingas* These coins can be dated to the second or first century B C

Figures of Śiva with his characteristic attributes like the trident battle axe etc with or without his mount the bull Nandi, and in different postures can be easily recognized on the coins of the Śaka Maues the Parthian Gondophares and the Kuṣana Wema Kadphises in the early centuries B C and A D On most of his coins Gondophares is described as *devavrata* (vowed to god), and almost certainly the *deva* here is Śiva In the coins of Kaniṣka and Huviṣka Śiva appears sometimes with three heads

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[2] Ep Ind XXIV pp 194 ff The five heroes as named in the *Vayu Puraṇa* are Samkarṣana son of Vasudeva by Rohiṇi Vasudeva (Kṛṣṇa) son of Vasudeva by Devaki Pradyumna son of Vasudeva (Kṛṣṇa) by Rukmiṇi Samba son of Vasudeva (Kṛṣṇa) by Jambavati — of probably non Aryan extraction and Aniruddha son of Pradyamna All of them are known to have been apotheosized and worshipped *The Cultural Heritage of India* (1956) IV p 115

adoration of Rudra under various circumstances cannot be considered to belong to any Śaiva sect The images of Śiva, Skanda and Viśākha mentioned by Patañjali as already noticed, and sometimes made of precious metals, were kept for common worship by certain religious persons who derived an income from them, they cannot have been meant for the use of a particular sect But even in Patañjali's time sects were not unknown as he mentions the Śivabhagavatas and the sectarian worship by the Satvatas of Vasudeva-Krsna[5] Even at the time of Panini, several centuries before Patanjali's time, the exclusive devotees of Śiva (Śivabhagavatas) were distinguished by certain external marks, they wore animal skins and bore clubs and tridents The Greek authors who describe North-Western India at the time of Alexander's invasion like Curtius and Diodorus mention the Sibae or Siboi (Śivas), a tribe in the Panjab who were dressed in animal skins, had clubs for their weapons, and branded their oxen and mules with the mark of a club We may suppose that Śiva was their tribal deity, and this seems to be confirmed by Patañjali's *mention of a northern village (udīcyagrama)* with the name Śivapura or Śaivapura

In Northern India, then, the iconographic representation of deities and the erection of temples for their worship had become well established by the beginning of the Christian era It was the complex result of the concurrence of many factors Ideas which animated the religious practice of the Indus Valley people and found expression in the 'Paśupati' seal doubtless furnished the background, though it seems possible that they were not received very favourably at first in Indo Aryan Society—witness the hostile references to Śiśnadevas in the Rigveda The Rigvedic practice of exalting one particular god above all others and treating him as the Supreme Being, which was described by Max Muller as Henotheism must also have contributed to the formation of sects distinguished by intense and perhaps exclusive devotion (*bhakti*) to particular gods The popular worship of local godlings dating most likely from pre-Aryan times and finding its manifestation in symbols shrines and images of sorts was a third element

The origin of the Buddha image has been a subject of some discussion, Foucher made out a plausible case for ascribing it to Gandhara and Greek influence, others have sought to derive it from an early school of art in Mathura and the Yakṣa primitives However this may be, there can be no doubt that the

[5] *Vaiṣnavism Śaivism* etc, pp 115 and 9

like being made of copper—a remarkably cool temple into which crowded laymen (Sāvakar i e, Śrāvakas) who came to worship with full blown flowers and incense, and wise ascetics with their gogglets, ascetics who knew the past, present and future, and all that is in heaven and on earth, and were ready *to impart their knowledge to the world*

We find reference to periodical festivals in temples lasting for many days and the special ritual performed on specified days during the festival We hear of the search for stone of proper quality for carving the image of a deity, which means that anthropomorphic figures of gods had become common But beyond the verbal descriptions of contemporary poets, we have no other means of ascertaining the appearance of the temples or the deities enshrined in them

Poygai, one of the earliest alvars, gives a valuable hint of the methods of worship prevalent in his day, he says that the devotees praised Viṣṇu, each in his own way, saying this and this (form of Viṣṇu) is my Lord, and among the forms (*mūrti*) which they painted on a wall or leaned against it, that which measured the universe (in its strides i e, Trivikrama) stood first An old poem (No 167) included in the anthology known *as Ahananuru (the* Aham 400) *refers casually to the ruins of* a temple, its brick walls and wooden beams had crashed down, and the god beautifully painted on the walls had long deserted it—which is striking confirmation of Poygai s reference to the painting on a wall of the deity to be worshipped Another poem (No 369) in the same collection mentions a beautiful wooden image of the deity painted in bright colours and fixed on the wall *(of the temple) Again the recent excavations in the* Nagarjunakonda area in the valley of the Kṛṣna river have brought to light a very interesting inscription of the third or fourth century A D recording the consecration of a wooden (*udumbara*) image of Astabhujasvamin (the eight armed god, here Viṣṇu—as the associated finds clearly attest) in the ninth year of an Abhira king. The structural remains in the area *comprised* three shrine chambers with a *dhvajastambha* (flag staff, c.f Heliodorus's *dhvajastambha* in Besnagar near Bhilsa) opposite one of them Two inscribed conches one bearing in addition an incised *cakra* (wheel) on a pedestal flanked by *ankusa* (elephant goad) and *chhatra* (umbrella) on either side, were *also found, one of the inscriptions reads bhagavato atha bhujasamisa* meaning 'of the adorable god with eight arms' A gold plaque with a nobleman holding a lotus and standing in the posture of adoration was among the antiquities recovered

from the area[6] From these data literary and archaeological we can surely draw the conclusions that the early temples were built of perishable material that the deities were either painted on walls or carved in wood and leaned against or fixed in a wall in the shrine for worship and that the devotees (*bhaktas*) were free to choose the particular form of a god that appealed to them most and make that the centre of their devotion (*bhakti*)

The transition from wooden and painted images employed in worship to the carving of stone images for the same purposes in South India is rather obscure There are indeed fairly early references to memorial stones (*nadu kal*) erected to commemorate heroic deeds of soldiers who laid down their lives in war or more often in the defence of their respective villages against cattle raiders and other depredators these stones were also as we have seen worshipped in the old pre Aryan way with offerings of unhusked rice (paddy) Whether these early memorial stones carried any sculpture of the hero or a written record of his achievement like some of the relatively recent ones is not clear most probably they did not References to the search for a stone of suitable quality for the carving of divine images occur only in later strata of Tamil literature Some of the earliest instances of the use of stone for this purpose come from the Andhra country They belong to the fifth or sixth century A D at the latest One of them is a small stone plaque preserved in the Śiva temple in the village of Madugula in the Macherla area of the Guntur District The carving presents a lively picture of Śiva with his family He is seated at ease and has four arms with one of his back arms holding the trident (*sula*) and the other a serpent (*naga*) his matted hair (*jata*) is gathered up in the shape of a turban (*usnisa*) on the head and there are flowers and the crescent moon adorning it His ear is adorned with a circular ear ring of the type known as *patra kundala* The third eye is present though he wears a smile of bliss and composure Around his neck is a necklace of pearls and he wears the sacred thread (*yajnopavita*) A fat dwarf (one of the *ganas*) supports his seat We see the Nandi the bull mount of the god lying to his left and the god is caressing the horns of the bull with his left (front) hand Parvati the

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[6] *Indian Archaeology* 1958 9 p 8 The inscription however is not quite clear The operative passage has been read differently and interpreted to mean that the image was painted with the best ochre but this seems a less plausible interpretation of an admittedly difficult phrase The inscription opens with salutation to Narayana described as bhagavan deva parama-deva (supreme god) and purana purusa.

consort of Siva is standing to his right holding his right arm in her left and supporting their child the baby Skanda on her hip She wears the usual ornaments on her head and neck The family is completed by the presence of Ganeśa with his elephant head seated on the left of Śiva There are also devotees worshipping the divine group and the flying couple at the right top corner may well represent Manmatha the Indian Eros and his wife Rati[7]

Not quite so artistic but much more interesting to a student of cults and iconography is the stone plaque from Peddamuḍiyam in Cuddapah District of about the same period In it there is a representation of several deities which furnishes a notable instance of an early *rapprochement* among the different cults within the fold of Hinduism In this plaque are represented in order from the left Ganesa seated on a lotus pedestal in the manner common in early Javanese sculpture viz with the soles of his feet meeting, the four faced Brahma (creator), the Man-lion *avatar* of Viṣṇu (Narasimha) the Śiva linga on a tall lotus pedestal Viṣṇu, Devī (Goddess) Uma mahesvara (i e the Goddess Parvatī and her consort Śiva) together with the Nandi their bull attendant and mount Lakṣmi — the goddess of prosperity and consort of Viṣṇu represented here by the Śrivatsa symbol and lastly Mahiṣāsura mardini i e the goddess Durga Pārvati engaged in the fight with the Asura (demon) named Mahisa (buffalo because he had a buffalo face)[8] Only the last named goddess engaged in a contest with the enemy has four arms all the others including the multifaced Brahma have only two arms These and other fragmentary pieces from the same area are with good reason held to belong to the period of Viṣṇukundin rule i e the fifth and early sixth centuries A D They show clearly the almost completed development of orthodox Purānic Hinduism with its multiplicity of gods and its colourful mythology In the century or two that followed this development was continued further and the Deccan which enjoyed the beneficial effects of political unification under the Cālukyas of Badami served as a bridge between the North and South of India and promoted the free exchange of influences religious artistic and literary to their mutual advantage and the cultural unification of India as a whole

In the far south the first temple in durable material of

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[7] C. Sivaramamurti *Early Eastern Calukya Sculpture* pp 1? 13 & Pl Ib

[8] *Ibid* p 12 and Pl. II A

which we have record is dedicated to the Trinity of the Hindu Pantheon, Brahmā, Visnu and Śiva It is a rock cut cave temple scooped out by the Pallava Mahendravarman I (A D 580 630) at Mandagappaṭṭu (a village in South Arcot district), this remarkable king calls himself *Vicitra citta* (inventive minded) and was fully conscious of the innovation he was making, in the short dedicatory inscription in the temple he says that he had made without the use of brick, timber, metal or mortar, a temple (*ayatana*) dedicated to Brahma, Īsvara (Śiva) and Viṣnu Unfortunately it is not possible now to say exactly how these deities were actually represented in the three shrine cells at the back of the rock cut cave The latest report, based on a careful inspection *in situ* of this and other Pallava rock-cut temples of Mahendravarman's time, reads 'The shrine cells in all cases are now empty and do not contain either a rock-cut *linga* (as is common in the Calukya, Pandya and Muttaraiyar Cave temples, or is seen at Bhairava-konda where the *linga* pedestal is at least rock cut) or any appropriate Śiva or Visnu image Often there is a slight relief of a pedestal cut at the base of the back wall indicating that the deity in worship was either a wall painting (*bhitti-chitra*) or was picked out in stucco from the plastered wall, above the line of the pedestal Tell tale traces of painted plaster extant in many places, as also the absence of any original water-outlet in the cell, would confirm this '[9]

From the reign of Paramesvaravarman I (672-700) the painting of stucco relief of the image on the back wall of the cella seems to have given place to a carving on the stone wall itself of a bas relief of Somaskanda[10] i e of Śiva and Parvati seated together with their little child Skanda in between This feature was repeated even after the practice of building temples out of cut stone came into vogue and after stone lingas were installed capable of being bathed with water in the course of worship The Panamalai temple (South Arcot District) dedicated to Talagirisvara (the lord of the palm-mountain) of the time of Rajasimha (695-722) contains in the main cella a Somaskanda bas-relief on the back wall and a dhara linga (i e a linga for being washed with water during worship) on the floor A general feature of Pallava structural temples as of the monolithic *rathas* (chariot-shaped temples) is the absence of the water chute (*pranāla*) usually found on the northern side

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[9] *Ancient India* No 14 (1958), p 122

[10] This compound word splits into sa — with Uma — Parvati and Skanda and applies to the representation of Śiva with his consort and child

of the shrines of a later time and calculated to draw off the *abhiseka* (ceremonial bath) water from inside the sanctum In the few instances where they occur, they are seen to be not part of the original design but later insertions This furnishes clear indication that the object of worship inside the cella was generally a painting or stucco relief that could not be bathed in daily worship, whether this also implies that *abhiseka* (bathing) of the image was a later innovation cannot be decided without further study Even where lingas were installed, the practice at first would seem to have been to collect the bath water in vessels inside the cella and distribute it to the devotees or dispose of it otherwise In any case, the lingas seem to have been secondary for some time after Rajasimha's reign, and the Somāskanda panel to have held the chief attention in worship Towards the close of the Pallava period however, say from some time in the ninth century A D, this panel gradually disappears from the back wall of the Śiva shrines, and the objects of worship, generally linga in Śiva shrines and other forms elsewhere, find a place on the floor at the centre of the cella and are free of any particular relation to its back wall

There is a notable difference in the iconography of the Pallava temples so far mentioned and that of the contemporary Pandya temples farther south which are also rock-cut Ganeśa in his Valampuri form (i e, with his trunk bent towards his proper right) is invariably found in the latter while he is unknown in the Pallava cave temples and monoliths Into the relatively late temples of the Pallava country, he is generally regarded as an importation from the Calukya capital Badami (Vatāpi) The Pandyas and Calukyas were often allied together in war against the Pallavas, and it seems probable that this political alliance led to the adoption of Ganesa worship in the Pandyan country somewhat earlier than in Pallava dominions Likewise, the Sapta matrkas (Seven Mothers), who were particularly worshipped by the Calukyas are also frequently found in the Pandyan cave temples They are first found in the Pallava country in the celebrated Kailasanatha temple at Kancipuram built by Rajasimha (eighth century)

By an evolution of which the stages can no longer be traced in detail, there came into existence a considerable body of religious opinion and practice which sought to outgrow the acerbities of sectarian animosity within the Hindu fold and establish harmony among the various groups, a development that belongs more to the sphere of popular practical religion of daily life than the higher speculative side of it. The new practice inaugu-

rated by some unknown genius consisted in the regular daily worship of five gods, viz, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devi, Sūrya and Ganesa in what is called *Pañcayatana pūjā*, i e, five shrine worship This worship is done at home with the aid of symbols[10a] representing the deities and those who practise it are known as Smartas or Traditionalists Some of them believe that Śankara Acarya introduced it and others ascribe it to Kumarila who preceded him by less than a century Yet others hold, perhaps correctly that the practice was of still earlier origin It is impossible to give a definite date It must be noted also that the five gods are representative of the whole pantheon and are by no means the exclusive objects of the devotion of the Smartas Note that of the four male gods two are Saiva and two Vaisnava, while the Devī (goddess) is common to both as mythology makes her the wife of Śiva and the sister of Visnu In South India the term Smarta implies not only the worship of the five gods but allegiance to Śankara s Vedanta as well, whereas in North India the Smarta is free in philosophy In the domestic worship (*puja*) of the five gods the image or symbol of the god whom the worshipper prefers his *istadevata* is placed in the centre and the other four are so set as to form a square around the central figure — a quincunx In addition to this worship the Smartas observe also the Sandhya i e the offering of prayers three times a day — at dawn midday and sunset

Despite this move towards sectarian harmony and some others to be noticed presently, the sectarian outlook did not altogether fade out It is not possible or necessary to describe the numerous sects and the differences among them The general situation may, however, be illustrated by a brief reference to the differentia of the two main subsects of the Śri Vaisnavas as the devotees of Visnu came to describe themselves after the time of Rāmanuja (1050 1137 A D), if not from the time of Nathamuni (c 1000) 'After Ramanuja s death says a modern Śrivaisnava scholar 'differences arose in interpretations and this led to differences in doctrines and observances At first the differences were only in philosophical explanations but as time rolled on the differences became larger and larger in number and at last when Pillai Lokacarya (end of 13th century) and Vedanta Desika (c 1380) appeared the Śri Vaiṣnavas became sharply divided into the two sections Tengalais (Southern school) and Vadagalais (Northern school) the former recognizing Pillai Lokacarya and the latter Vedanta Deśika as their leader' Both

[10a] See Farquhar *Outline* p 293 n 2

schools recognize the validity of Sanskrit and Tamil scripture, but the Southern uses Tamil and the Nalayira Prabandham in that language much more than the Northern Both use a white U mark with vertical red line in the centre (the *namam*) as the sect mark that of the southern school has a light prolongation of the white from the bottom of the U down the nose Widows belonging to the southern school do not undergo tonsure From the early fifteenth century Manavala Mamuni (1370-1443), called Ramya Jāmātrmuni in Sanskrit became *the special Ācarya of the Tengalais after Ramanuja,* just as Vedanta Desika was for the Vaḍagalai and the two subsects honoured each its own separate succession of Acaryas in general Other notable differences between them were for the northern school Laksmi the female consort (Śakti) of Viṣnu is in every way equal to him and shares all his Vibhutis (powers), and co operates with him in the protection of the universe, but according *to the southern school Śri or Laksmi is definitely inferior* to Narayana in fact just one of the created lives (*jīvakoṭis*) with no pretence whatever to the divine powers (*vibhutis*) While both schools agree that surrender to God (*prapatti*) is the means to salvation they differ on the place of individual effort in the process The northern school holds that a great deal of preparation on the part of the individual is a necessary preliminary *to the surrender* the southern *school denies this* and affirms that as God s love is spontaneous a mere act of surrender is enough The difference is summed up in picturesque similes — the northern view being described as the law of the young monkey (*markata kisora nyaya*) which actively clings to the mother s body when it is being carried about and the southern view as the kitten rule — (*marjarakisora nyaya*) by which *the young one is picked up by the mother in its mouth and* carried about from place to place The Śri vaisnava hermits (*sanyasis*) have a *tridanda* (three bamboo sticks tied together) as their staff and not one bamboo stick like the *sanyasis* of the *advaita* (Śankara) school they also retain the *śikha* (tuft on the head) perform the daily prayers of the Sandhya worship god and perform other daily rites unlike their counterparts of *the advaita* school

In Śaivism by the side of the pure *bhakti* represented by the three saintly authors of the *Devaram* and by Manikkavaśagar there existed other types of worshippers of Śiva whose tenets and practices are gruesome and repellant to modern taste Among *such groups must be counted the Pāsupatas (adorers of Pasu* pati) Kapalikas (skull bearers) Kalāmukhas (black faces) and

others whose presence in large numbers at different centres like Kāñcīpuram is evidenced by inscriptions and literature from the seventh century onwards; they claim to have been established either by Paśupati or the more tangible historical figure of Lakulīśa (first century A D). In the Deccan a copper plate charter of the time of Pulakeśin II (acc A D 610) records the grant of a village in the Nasik District for the worship of the Kapāleśvara, i e, the lord of (the weavers of garlands of) skulls, and for the maintenance of the Mahāvratins residing in the temple; the name Mahāvratin, 'observer of the great vow', designated the Kāpālikas or Kālāmukhas; 'the greatness of their vow', says Bhandarkar, 'consists in its extraordinary nature, such as eating food placed in a human skull, besmearing the body with the ashes of human carcasses and others which are attributed to the Kālāmukhas by Rāmānuja'[11] Whatever the mutual relations among these different sects, all of which were marked by such horrible practices, the ordinary people do not seem to have made a sharp distinction among them It must be observed, however, that these demoniacal sects, which perhaps included an ascetic class as well as a class of lay followers or householders, perhaps formed all together only a small fraction of the large numbers of the worshippers of the ancient divinity of Śiva Some of these sects, if not all, were addicted to the worship of the female principle—of which more will be said presently, and the worship tended at times to degenerate into licentious orgies The practice of the devotee (*bhakta*) offering his own head as a sacrifice to the goddess is shown clearly in the sculpture and literature of the age of the Pallavas and Colas

Among the more benign developments in the fold of Śaivism, two deserve particular attention—viz, the growth of Vīra-Śaivism (stalwart Śaivism) or Lingāyatism[12] and of the very similar Ārādhya Śaivism in the Telugu country The Vīra Śaiva sect was founded on the borders of the Karnataka and Mahārāstra country in the twelfth century, and spread rapidly in the south in the Kannada area The sectarians claim a hoary antiquity for their creed, but historically it is not traceable farther back than about 1160 A D when Basava, the Prime Minister of Bijjala, the Kalacuri king of Kalyāni, gave his powerful support to the new creed started by Ekāntada (exclusively devoted) Rāmayya of Ablur whose career is recorded in detail in a con-

[11] *Vaisnavism* etc, p 128

[12] So called because each votary carried a *lingam* on his body, usually encased in a small container suspended from the neck It is known as the *jangama* linga, mobile linga

so as to carry it on the right shoulder instead of on the left as usual), no sesamum, no *darbha* grass and no *homa* (fire oblation) or *pinda* (ball of rice), all of which are essential to a *śraddha*. Their widows do not shave their heads. In spite of their differences, the relations between the Āradhyas and Lingayats were friendly and in the fourteenth century they joined together to resist the inroads of Islam and prepare the way for the glories of Vijayanagar.

The worship of the goddess Durgā and her varied manifestations gave rise to a number of sects of which a special mention is necessary. These sects which adore the female principle have their roots both in the pre-historic tradition of the Mother Goddess and also in the principle of the Great Tradition which sees in the female Śakti the active generative, dynamic impulse in the manifestations of the Absolute in the universe. The *Mahabharata* celebrates Durgā, the slayer of the Buffalo-demon (*mahisasura mardini*), as a virgin goddess, who dwells in the Vindhya mountains, delights in wine, flesh and animal sacrifice, is the sister of Krṣna and like him dark in colour, and wears a crest of peacock feathers. Elsewhere in the same epic she is no longer regarded as a virgin, but definitely identified with Uma, the wife of Śiva, and is also identified with the Vedas, Vedanta and many other things. She is also regarded as the Brahman of the upanisads, the one Reality set far above all other divinities. Here we see clearly the results of syncretism of many elements including a virgin goddess worshipped by the wild tribes of the Vindhyas, parts of the Krṣṇa myth, and ideas from the mythology and philosophy of the veda and upaniṣads. Many indeed are the forms in which the goddess (Devi) is worshipped in different parts of the country, they vary according to the groups of worshippers and occasions of worship, and we cannot stop to review any of them in detail. Some forms peculiar to the South may, however, be briefly mentioned. The village deities grama devatas who have already been mentioned as worshipped with the sacrifice of animals—goats, cocks and sometimes buffaloes, and as belonging to the Little Tradition, are all regarded generally as manifestations of the goddess. Then there is the tradition regarding the Mothers, whose number and names vary with the context. The Early Calukyas of Badami (sixth-seventh century A.D.) described themselves as descendants of Hariti nurtured by the Seven Mothers—*Harītī putranam sapta matrbhirabhivardhitanam*. In the *Brhatsamhita* of Varahamihira we find the iconographic rule that Mothers are to be made with cognisances of the gods corresponding to their

names—Indrāṇī for instance being represented with the elephant Airāvata, Vaiṣṇavī with the discus (*cakra*) and the conch (*śankha*) and so on The Mothers indeed form an indefinite group (*gana*), an assemblage of the Saktis (female counterparts) of every male divinity, of whom seven were chosen as most representative by a widely accepted tradition These are often carved together in relief on a single rectangular stone slab and are found flanked by Vīrabhadra and Ganeśa on either side The Mātṛkā slabs are common in South Indian temples One of the earliest and finest of these is found in the Kailasa temple at Kāñcīpuram

Sometimes the male deities are conceived as inseparably associated with their śaktis and the two are worshipped together in specially prepared icons like those of Lakṣmī Narāyana, Lakṣmī-Nrsimha, Rādhā krsna, Ardhanarīśvara (the hermaphrodite form of Siva), of which we get an early example in the Dharmaraja Ratha at Māmallapuram (seventh-eighth century A D), and so on These composite images and the combined worship offered to them may also be regarded as indicating an effort to bring closer together śaktism (worship of female principle) and the more ordinary form of worship of male deities Another remarkable attempt at transcending the sectarian outlook and ensuring religious harmony resulted in the concept of Hari Hara or Sankara Nārayana, and the cult images of this creed consist of composite forms of the deity in which one half of the body is figured as Saiva i e, bearing the marks of Siva like matted hair with Gangā in it, the antelope, the tiger skin for robe and so on, the other half being Vaisnava with the jewelled crown (*kirita*) on the head, the conch, the discus, the Sarnga bow, or the mace in different hands This *rapprochement* between the forms of Siva and Visnu calculated to proclaim that all divinities are just different manifestations of the Supreme to suit the different contexts seems to have come about very early in the Christian era, Harihara images are very common in the Hindu colonies of South East Asia where they are met with perhaps in larger numbers than in India

What is the exact role of the idol or image in the practice of Hinduism? The view accepted by the majority of Hindus is that it is a symbol of god, an aid to the mind of the devotee to concentrate itself on the divine and become one with it, prayer and worship are directed in fact not to the idol as such but to the spiritual power which directs the universe and is conceived by the worshipper in the particular form that makes a special appeal to him, the idol is only a concrete symbol (*pratīka*)

meant to aid the concentration of his mind The worshippers of Viṣnu, however, take a different view of the matter, there are two traditions (*Āgamas*) among them which are called *Vaikhānasa* and *Pāñcarātra*, the first name is derived from that of a founder Rishi (sage) named Vikhanas, the derivation of Pāñcarātra (five nights) is uncertain—being connected by some with the sacrifices performed by the original adherents of the cult five times a year or with their observation of some vows according to five *rātras* or seasons, others connect the name with a sacrifice performed by the cosmic *puruṣa* (man) or Nārayana over a period of five *rātris* (nights) These two traditions differ from each other in many small details such as the description and disposition of subsidiary deities (*parivāra devatas*) in temples Again the *Pancarātras* have admitted innovations unknown to the older and more conservative *Vaikhānasa* tradition—such as the consecration of Āndal and other women devotees who are believed to have attained the status of the Lord s consort (*naccivār* in Tamil) like Lakṣmī, by the practice of the *nayikā nayaka* (loved and lover) type of *bhakti* Despite such minor differences, the two traditions are agreed in regarding the image (*arca*) of Viṣnu as one of the real forms of the Lord, an *avatāra*, an epiphany witnessing the easy accessibility of the Lord to the devotee, who finds his surrender (*prapatti*) rendered easier thereby The *Vaikhanasas*, again, lay more stress than others on service to the *arcā* as the primary duty of the devotee, and do not fritter their energy on the worship of the *alvars* and *ācāryas* whose images, however, are set up sometimes in *Vaikhanasa* temples as in the *Pāncaratra* Other differentiae of the *Vaikhanasas* are that they do not brand their bodies with the Vaiṣnava emblems of Cakra Sankha etc, as the other school does, nor do they recite the Tamil hymns of the *Prabandham* during worship

/ To complete this brief and selective sketch of the principal religious sects of South India, some account must be given of the non-vedic and non-Hindu faiths which flourished in more or less strength alongside of those so far mentioned Jain tradition claims that the first Mauryan emperor Candragupta abdicated the throne when the Patriarch Bhadrabahu foretold a twelve years' famine in Magadha and migrated with him to the South where in due course he terminated his ascetic life by the orthodox rite of *sallekhana* (starving unto death) on a hillock in Śravana Belgoḷa in the Mysore country This tradition is repeated in relatively late inscriptions from the tenth century onwards at Śravana Belgoḷa and there is no other clear account of the actual end of the first Maurya emperor In any event, it

seems probable that Jainism gained an early foothold in S India and some of the natural caverns of the Tamil districts with stone beds and short *Brāhmī inscriptions* must have been occupied by Jaina ascetics Tradition credits Vajranandi with having established the Dravida Sangha in Madura about A D 470 and this seems to fit in very well with the accounts of the ascendancy of Jainism in the Paṇḍya Country before Sambandar went over and put it down at the instance of the Paṇḍyan queen and minister

The spread of Buddhism in the Deccan and the farther South is better attested by the inscriptions of Asoka in which he claims to have sent missions to four Tamil countries for preaching the *Dhamma* and for establishing hospitals for men and animals and by monumental remains such as the *caityas* (temples) and *vihāras* (monasteries) cut into the Western Ghats in the neighbourhood of Poona and the numerous stupas of the lower Kṛṣna valley in coastal Andhra country Hiuen Tsang noticed the decline of Buddhism in the seventh century and the intense activity of Hindu saints the *nayanars* and *ālvārs* in the seventh to ninth centuries A D must have adversely affected the fortunes of both Buddhism and Jainism The renascent Hinduism of Andhra began the worship of the Buddha at Amaravati as an incarnation of Viṣnu and converted many other Buddhist centres into Hindu shrines But both the religions survived the storm and continued to flourish for quite a long time and there are still in existence some noteworthy centres of Jainism Some large centres of religion and learning like Ellora and Kancipuram cherished institutions belonging to all these creeds side by side and produced remarkable achievements in architecture and sculpture painting literature and the other arts

The Jains found patrons among the royalty and merchants of the Kannada country in particular and both Kannada and Tamil literatures count remarkable contributions from Jain authors Buddhist writers of Tamil continued to be equally important till the fourteenth century or so and great logicians and divines like Dinnaga Dharmapala and Dharmakirti came from Kancipuram and its neighbourhood There were Buddhist settlements of considerable proportions in Negapatam on the east coast and in Srimulavasam on the West Negapatam was the first port of call for travellers to India from Malaya and Indonesia and a King of the Sumatran empire of Srivijaya erected a large monastery there (c 1000 A D) for the use of his subjects when they visited South India In north western Deccan also new Buddhist Viharas were coming up late in the ninth century in 853 a monk from Bengal built a great monastery in Kṛṣnagiri (Kanheri) for the

use of the *sangha* and endowed it with one hundred gold *drammas* (cf Drachma) In the same neighbourhood a meditation hall was constructed for monks in 877 and other endowments are recorded for the regular worship of the Buddha The Jain temple at Aihole built by Ravikirti in 634 is said to have been the abode of all excellences, and Jain temples and monasteries continued to be built everywhere in the extensive dominions ruled by the Cālukyas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, seventh to tenth centuries Rāṣṭrakūṭa Amoghavarṣa I (814-80) found solace by retiring to a Jain monastery more than once in the course of his long reign The Western Gangas generally and the Eastern Calukyas on occasions also patronized Jainism E Calukya Amma II (mid tenth century) built two *Jinālayas* (temples of Jina) and established *sattras* (feeding houses) attached to them where *śramanas* (Jain monks) of all the four castes were to be fed Jainism was closer to Hinduism in its beliefs and practices, thus in 812 a Jain temple was endowed for the removal of trouble caused to a Calukya Vimaladitya by the planet Sanaiscara (Saturn) In Jain grants we find donees required to use the proceeds of the endowment for their daily rites and observances in terms identical with those employed in Hindu endowments Influential guilds of merchants often included a strong Jain wing in their membership Soon after the establishment of Vijayanagar, the Jains complained to King Bukkaraya of persecution by the Vaiṣṇavas, the monarch interceded (1368) and decreed that both parties should practise their respective religions with equal freedom and without mutual interference Though perhaps steadily losing ground Jainism has not altogether disappeared from the country like Buddhism Buddhist values however are experiencing a new vogue in independent India which has adopted Asoka's Lion pillar of Saranath as its emblem

The Ājivikas were another sect outside the pale of orthodoxy which continued to count some adherants in South India long after its disappearance elsewhere Founded by Gośala Maskariputra a contemporary of the Buddha and Mahavira this strictly deterministic school was influential in the Mauryan period *in North India and Asoka and his successor Dasaratha presented* fine rock-cut cave dwellings to them They believed in an inexorable *Niyati* (Destiny) which man was unable to counteract The South Indian Ājivika monks practised severe asceticism and probably influenced by Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism, came to look upon Gośala as 'an ineffable divinity', they also developed the 'view that all change and movement were illusory, and that the world was in reality eternally and immovably at rest'

population of Malabar comprised the Mappillas, but the arrival of the Portuguese checked the growth of Muslim power and ruined the Arab trade Under Bahmani rule (1347-1527) numbers of foreigners — Persians, Turks, Arabs and Mughals — came in search of trade or office, settled in the Deccan and formed unions with the women of the land Later came the extension of the Mughal sway over Bijapur and Golkonda, and the rise of Nizam's state of Hyderabad in the eighteenth century — a state which continued intact till 1956 when it was disintegrated and added to the States of Bombay, Andhra Pradesh and Mysore on a linguistic basis All the same, the bulk of the population continued Hindu, and the number of Muslims in the former 'Hyderabad State' never exceeded fifteen per cent

How far did Islam influence the religious thought and practice of South India? Some traits of the Hindu revival, such as the increasing emphasis on monotheism, on emotional worship, on self-surrender, on the need for devotion to a spiritual teacher, and the growing laxity in the observance of caste rules and indifference to ritual at least among some sects, have all been held to be in some way or other the result of Islamic influence But these developments may well be explained from the internal history of Hinduism itself, and there is no direct evidence of the influence of Islam on their growth Perhaps, after all, it is not an accident that sects grew 'more definite in doctrine and organization especially among Viṣṇuites, as Hindus became more familiar with Islam' (Eliot)

THE JEWS The Jews are found mostly on the Malabar coast When they reached there is hard to determine since their old records were destroyed by the Portuguese when they attacked their original settlement in Cranganur in 1565 and when later they plundered the Synagogue in Cochin as they suspected the Jews of having aided the Dutch against them In the eighteenth century, captain Hamilton recorded in *A New Account of the East Indies* (1744) 'the Jews (of Cochin) can show their own history from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the present time Logan, in his *Malabar Manual* says 'the Jews have traditions which carry back their arrival to the time of their escape from servitude under Cyrus in the sixth century B C' and Sir W Hunter speaks of Jewish settlements in Malabar long before the second century A D They possess charters given them by the Malabar rulers in old Tamil (Vatteluttu) characters of probably the eighth century A D The Jews themselves say that Mar Thomas the apostle, arrived in India in A D 52, and themselves in 69 At Cochin the Jews seem to have enjoyed full freedom, religious

and civil and to have remained without attracting any opposition or persecution for many centuries till in the sixteenth century they fell victims to the attacks of fanatical Moors and Christians

The Cochin Jews are generally divided into two classes the White and the Black The Black Jews claim to have been the earliest settlers while the White Jews came later But the latter assert that the former are pure natives converted to the Jewish faith Even historians and antiquarians are quite as divided on the questions of priority of settlement and purity of race between the two sections About A D 1170 Benjamin of Tudela who refers to the Jews of Cochin and Quilon found no White Jews among them But Linschoten (c 1590) mentions Jews who were rich merchants and the nearest counsellors of the king of Cochin and who were most white of colour like men of Europe and had many fair women and were supposed to have come from Palestine and Jerusalem The White Jews who prospered under the Dutch have dwindled to less than 200 in number now Although the White Jews are fair some of them are certainly not quite white nor are the Black Jews quite black, some of the Black Jews are hardly distinguishable from their white brethren Their customs ritual and religious observances are the same

The Black are still the ones that make use of the privileges granted in the copper plate charter They still carry a silk umbrella and lamps lit at day time when proceeding to the Synagogue on the eighth day after birth of sons They spread a cloth on the ground and place ornaments of leaves across the road on occasions when their brides and bridegrooms go to get married After the wedding is over four silk sunshades each supported on four poles are borne with lamps burning in front as the bridal party goes home The Black Jews say that the White Jews use none of these and never have done so, but the White Jews say that they used them once but have discontinued them Jealousy and strife between the two sections on matters of intermarriage and equal privileges seem to have existed during the time of the Portuguese and Dutch and Canter Visscher alludes to them in his *Letters from Malabar* (No 18) The White Jews appear to have maintained the purity of their race by declining inter marriage with the Black Jews The Jews at one time had numerous slaves whom they converted to their faith They are said to have had former fugitive connections with the women of these converts and brought into existence a mixed race of Dravidians and Semitics But we cannot infer from this that all the Black Jews are the descendants of converted

slaves or half castes, as it would be unreasonable to suppose that all of them are the descendants of the original settlers

In recent years the Black Jews have developed a new distinction between Brown Jews and Black Jews, the former claiming to be the genuine Jews with surnames, the true descendants of the Cranganur or Singli Jews The White Jews are generally known as Paradeśis (foreigners)

The Jews wear a long tunic of rich colour, a waistcoat buttoned up to the neck, and full white trousers They go about wearing a skull cap, and put on a turban when they go to the synagogue The Black Jews dress more or less like the native Muslims Many of them put on shirts, and have skull caps like the Jonaka Mappilas They generally wear coloured clothes The Jews invariably use wooden sandals These, and their locks brought down in front of the ears, distinguish them from other sections of the population The Jewesses always wear coloured clothes Hebrew is still the liturgical language, and is studied as a classic by a few, but the home language is Malayalam The White Jews celebrate their marriage on Sundays, but the Black Jews still retain the ancient custom of celebrating them on Tuesdays after sunset Though polygamy is not prohibited, monogamy is the rule The males generally marry at the age of 20, while the marriageable age for girls is 14 or 15 Marriages are generally celebrated on a grand scale The festivities continue for seven days in the case of the White Jews and for fifteen days among the Black Jews who still make use of some of the ancient privileges granted by the charter of Cheramān Perumāl The Jews of all sections have adopted a few Hindu customs Thus, before going to the synagogue for marriage, a *tali* (marriage badge) is tied round the bride's neck by some near female relative of the bridegroom (generally his sister) in imitation of the Hindu custom, amidst the joyful shouts (kurava) of women Divorce is not effected by a civil tribunal Marriages are dissolved by making good the amount mentioned in the kethuba or marriage document In regard to their funerals the corpse is washed, but not anointed and is deposited in the burial-ground which is called Beth Haim the house of living

Like their brethren in other parts of the world, the Cochin Jews observe the Sabbath feasts and fasts blended intimately with their religion and practise the rite of circumcision on the eighth day, when the child is also named The Passover is celebrated by the distribution of unleavened bread, but no kid is killed, nor is blood sprinkled upon the door-post and lintel The other feasts are the feast of Pentecost feast of Trumpets, and

feast of Tabernacles The day of atonement and the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem are observed as fasts On the day of atonement, the Jews pray in the synagogue from 5 a m till 7 p m The Jewish fasts commence from 5 p m on the day previous to the fast and end at 7 p m next day Their days begin and end with sunset The feast of Tabernacles is observed *with more pomp and ceremony than other feasts* [12a]

CHRISTIANS The origins of Christianity in South India centre round the sea ports — Cranganore (Muziris of the Greeks) and Goa on the West Coast Tranquebar on the east The Syrian Christians have a tradition that Apostle Thomas (Mar Thoma) after visiting Parthia and the Kingdom of Gondophares in North-west of India landed in Cranganore (c 52 A.D) preached the Gospel, and established several churches on the Malabar coast before he moved to the east coast where he fell a martyr to the faith at St Thomas Mount The authenticity of this tradition has often been questioned and it is over thirty years since Farquhar wrote 'Thirty years ago the balance of probability stood absolutely against the story of the apostolate of St Thomas in India, today the balance of possibility is distinctly on the side of historicity' Somewhat better attested is the arrival about mid-fourth century A D of a body of Christian immigrants from Persia and Mesopotamia who fled from persecution by Sapor II, they were led by one known as Knae Thomman i e Thomas the Mer*chant and they found welcome at the hands of the Hindu King* of Cranganore where they landed The Alexandrian merchant Cosmas Indicopleustes (voyager to India) travelled in India in the second quarter of the sixth century A D, found a community of Christians both clergy and laity in Ceylon and said 'Similarly in Male (Malabar perhaps more particularly Quilon) where pepper grows and in the place called Caliana (Kalyan near Bombay) there is also a bishop who receives imposition of hands from Persia The Christians of Ceylon and Malabar were Nestorians From the sixth to the sixteenth century there were different waves of immigrants from western Asia to Malabar and they seem to have had a cordial reception Copper plate grants of the eighth and ninth centuries show that many natives had accepted conversion though they were not yet very numerous *In these copper plate grants and in the inscribed Persian* crosses found at St Thomas Mount Kottayam in Travancore and elsewhere we find the use of Pahlavi attesting their connec-

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[12a] This account of the Jews is based on Thurston — *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* Vol II

EVELOPMENT OF RELIGION IN SOUTH INDIA

BY

K. A NILAKANTA SASTRI



ORIENT LONGMANS

tion with the East Syrian or Nestorian church Among visitors to the Malabar church who have left notices of it were Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller (1293), Friar Jordan of Toulouse, a Dominican (1302), and John de Marignolli (1348), all of them make it clear that the Malabar Christians were not only good traders but patriotic soldiers and administrators The Christians of St Thomas are now known as Syrian Christians on account of their connection with the Syriac speaking churches in the East and the use of Syriac as their ecclesiastical language

The Roman Catholic church came in with the Portuguese, and though for a time its relations with the old Syrian church were friendly, soon relations became strained and at the end of the sixteenth century at the Synod of Diamper (Udayamperur) the Syrian church was obliged to promise obedience to the Pope and merge itself in the Roman church But later with the help of the Dutch the Syrian church renounced the authority of the Pope and regained its independence (1653) and placed itself under a bishop sent out by the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch In the nineteenth century the Syrian church gained new life by its contact with the many active Protestant Missions that came in to work in South India The Syrian Christians of the west coast are now about two millions in number and are divided into four or five sections including one section who are members of the Church of South India, until lately closely connected with western churches, but quite an independent organization since September 1947, though at present it does not include even all the non Roman Christians in the South, still it is likely to exert its influence for unity and co-operation in the social activities of the churches in the field of education, medical relief creative literature and so on

The sixteenth century, when Portuguese power was well established in the Indian ocean was the period when Roman Catholic Missions became prominent in the South With Goa and Cochin and Tuticorin as their bases, Portuguese missionaries preached the gospel to the fisherfolk on the coasts and later went into the interior Francis Xavier (1506 52) was the first Jesuit missionary to reach India and he was one of the greatest in the whole history of the Church Robert de Nobili (1577 1656) born an Italian nobleman led the life of Sanyāsin adopting his dress and ways of life and attracted many from the higher classes by his habits and ideals as well as by his erudition He too belonged to the Society of Jesus which led the van in the seven teenth century established seminaries, and encouraged liberal education Jesuits brought the first printing press to India about

1550 and a Spanish lay brother cast the Malayalam types with which a catechism was printed in 1577 Missions sponsored by other orders — Franciscans (1517), Dominicans (1578), Augustinians (1572) and Carmelites (1656), followed The contribution of Catholic missions in the field of education of all stages is a notable one, and perhaps to-day they form the largest single private interest in the field

Tranquebar on the Tanjore coast became the birth place of Protestant Christianity in South India when some German Lutherans landed there in 1706 under the protection of the king of Denmark who owned that coast town Ziegenbalg's translation of the four Gospels (1714) is one of the earliest specimens of modern Tamil prose C F Schwartz (1726 97) who has been compared to C F Andrews of recent times was the trusted friend and counsellor of the Raja of Tanjore and the mediator between Haidar Ali and the British East India Company, he also saved many people from famine during the Carnatic wars In the nineteenth century when the East India Company adopted a more liberal attitude to missionary work in response to pressure from British public opinion a number of other Protestant missions were established in various places in South India, they came from Great Britain Europe and the U S A Since 1900 the growth of the church was specially marked among the under privileged in Madras and Andhra States In 1947 there were over 150 missionary societies at work in India and a fair proportion of these was represented in the South In that year most of the societies merged themselves in the newly formed Church of South India In modern times the missions have taken a broad view of their work and have not been content to preach the gospel but to work for a fuller life for all Agriculture sanitation handicrafts the entire rural economy in general have enlisted their interest in addition to education and medical relief

The long contact between Christianity and Hinduism has naturally led to transformation due to mutual influences which are naturally more apparent where the contact has been longest The Syrian Christians of Malabar approximate the Nairs in some of their social customs and the system of caste which began to prevail in sections of the church had to be fought down strenuously and it may well be doubted if the fight has quite succeeded Some good things in Hindu literature and religion have sometimes been traced to the influence of Christianity The *Kural* generally regarded as the Bible of South India and the *Bhagavad gita* as well as the Bhakti movement have been held to demonstrate the influence of Christian ideas, this has been

denied by others Grierson may be taken to sum up the true position, he says 'But it was in the Southern India that Christianity, as a doctrine, exercised the greatest influence on Hinduism generally Although the conception of the fatherhood of God and of *bhakti* were indigenous to India, they received an immense impetus owing to the beliefs of the Christian communities reacting upon the mediaeval Bhāgavata reformers of the South' On the other hand, the Indian Christians are responding to the call of Nationalism They seek the independence of their church from the domination of foreign control and modes of thought They wish to rethink Christianity in terms of Indian thought and life and to express its genius in Indian modes and patterns They have started a movement for the establishment of Christian *aśramas* (hermitages) beginning with one started at Tirupattur (North Arcot) in 1921 and leading to the establishment of a dozen others elsewhere, they all stand for the same ideals of communion with God and fellowship in the service of humanity The chapel at Tirupattur is built in the style of South Indian temple architecture Indian tunes and Indian musical instruments find increasing use in Christian worship in the *asramas* This is a revival of de Nobili s policy on a wider front, on an institutional instead of individual basis Whether this will result in larger numbers of Hindus adopting Christianity remains to be seen [13]

PARSIS The Parsis who follow the religion of Zoroaster are concentrated in Bombay and Gujerat Iran felt the impact of Islam when it was new and vigorous in the seventh century, Zoroastrianism could not hold its own and was nearly wiped out of the land of its birth A few who clung to the ancient faith, left their motherland and found refuge in India (A D 936) These Parsi 'Pilgrim Fathers' brought with them the sacred fire of ancient Iran They erected a temple for it on Indian soil and after many vicissitudes, the sacred Iranshah fire has now been established at Udwada a small town about eighty miles north of Bombay There are now about 100 000 Zoroastrians in India and about 12 000 in Persia The Parsi community while retaining their ancient religion and its ritual observances have been quite friendly to the other communities including Europeans They distinguished themselves in ship-building in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and took the lead in the modern Industrial Revolution of India The first steel-mill in Jamshedpur was a product of the imagination of a Parsi magnate Sir J N Tata

[13] The section on Christianity is largely based on Rev C E Abraham s contribution The Rise and Growth of Christianity—India' in Vol IV of *The Cultural Heritage of India* (1956)

The community produced eminent political leaders in Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, D. E. Wacha and others The Tatas have maintained their leading role in trade and industry including aviation A leading Parsi scholar claims: 'The external truth which Zarathustra proclaimed ages ago in Iran are still kept alive as living ideals among the Parsis in India'[14]

[14] *The Cultural Heritage of India*, iv p 546 Farquhar places the Parsi migration into India at the beginning of the eighth century, more than a century earlier than Dr I. J S Taraporewala.

V. PHILOSOPHIES IN RELATION TO RELIGION

In India philosophy has always stood in close relation to religion and life It has generally laid stress on the spiritual nature of man and sought to relate him in one way or other to a universe also essentially spiritual in character, the only exception was the minor materialistic school of the Cārvākas or Lokayatas who do not seem ever to have been influential Indian philosophy has gained depth and power from its close association with religion, and the purpose of philosophy has been to regulate life The Indian philosopher aims in fact not merely at knowing the truth and formulating a system of ultimate truth as he conceives it, but of realizing it, becoming one with it so to say, and living it every moment of his life Moral purification has generally been recognized as a necessary preliminary to the entry on philosophical search, and Śankara formulated this demand as comprising four requirements, viz, an enquiring mind which has become dimly aware of the distinction between the transient and the permanent and seeks to explore it further, a renunciation of all desire for personal gain or advantage, qualities of self-control and faith, and a desire for spiritual liberation (*moksa*) While accepting the usefulness and validity of Reason, the intellectual process, as means to discovery of truth, the philosophy of India holds that intellectual knowledge so gained is not enough, and that the truth must be realized and actually experienced by intuition, this is implied in the very name *darsana* (vision) applied to a philosophical system in India All Indian systems except the materialist Cārvaka, agree that this direct perception or experience of ultimate reality is beyond the reach of reason and superior to it From this peculiarity flows the consequence that the authority of scripture, *Sruti* or revelation, is accepted as the authentic record of the experiences of the seers of the past This respect for authority is, however, no bar to the freedom of its interpretation as is evident from the diversity in the attitudes of different *darsanas* to fundamental metaphysical problems Thus 'the original Samkhya says nothing about the possible existence of God, although it is emphatic in its doctrine of the theoretical undemonstrability of his existence, the Vaiśesika and the Yoga, especially the latter, admit the existence of God, but do not consider him to be the creator of the universe, the

Mīmāmsā speaks of God but denies his importance and efficacy in the moral ordering of the world'.[1] Unlike Western philosophy which is analytic in its approach to reality and experience, Indian philosophy is essentially synthetic Its basic texts treat not of any one phase of experience, but of the entire sphere 'Metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, religion, psychology, facts, and value are not cut off one from the other but are treated in their natural unity as aspects of one life and experience or of a single comprehensive reality'[2]

The ultimate aim of all schools of philosophy in India is the practical one of *mokṣa* (liberation), even the Carvaka is interested not in theory, but in a life of material enjoyment, since he holds that the world is conducive to that kind of life and no other All the schools which fall within the elastic framework of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, accept some basic concepts, particularly those of *Karma* and rebirth, as the means by which the moral order of the universe works itself out in the life of man They all accept escape from this cycle of births (*samsāra*) as the true goal, though they differ about the nature of the road to such liberation, and about the nature of the liberated state, some hold that it is only cessation of suffering while others describe it as a state of positive bliss, the achievement of a richer and fuller life, eternal and free from entanglements The road to the goal lies through ethical conduct, comprising the suppression of the possessive and acquisitive instinct, friendliness and compassion to all, and the performance of duty without any selfishness or attachment to the things of the world

In philosophy as in religion South India derived its initial impulse from the North, but in the course of centuries made striking contributions to thought and practice The Veda and the Āgama constitute, broadly speaking, the sources respectively of philosophy as systematized in the *darśanas* and of temple worship together with its philosophic background The two lines of development reacted on one another and were never fully separated, much less antagonistic to each other The *darśanas* are historically developments of the religion of sacrifice and ritualism, which becomes complex and overgrown in the Brāhmanas, and provokes a speculative reaction reflected in the Upaniṣads, the Upaniṣads, particularly the early ones, which are not more than a dozen in number, form the records of an age of earnest spiritual quest, philosophy in the making so to say,

[1] *A Source Book of Indian Philosophy*, Radhakrishnan and Moore (1957) p xxv
[2] *Ibid*, pp xxv xxvi

eloquent and mystic utterances in prose and verse describing the visions of many seers and schools They are the Vedanta, end of the Veda, which gives its name to the most influential of the *darśanas* The philosophy of the earlier phase of the Veda and its ritualism is the *Mīmāmsa* (meaning investigation), sometimes called the *Pūrva Mimamsā* to bring it into organic relation with Vedanta, which from this standpoint is called *Uttara-Mimamsa* The contribution of South India in both these fields was most significant and this must be described in some detail The other four *darsanas* comprising the two pairs of Nyaya-Vaisesika and Samkhya-Yoga, while they are important in the general history of Indian philosophy, are not of much direct concern to us

We must note, however, that the Buddhist Tamil poem *Manimekalai* (Canto 27) portrays the different schools of philosophy that were in vogue in the Cera capital Vañji (Karur) about the sixth or seventh century A D It mentions the schools of Pramana (means of valid knowledge) which traced themselves to Vedavyāsa, Krtakoti and Jaimini and accepted ten and eight and six *pramanas* respectively, it concludes this section on *pramānas* with a terse statement naming six schools with their founders in the ascending order of the number of *pramanas* they recognized among the six current ones viz, Lokayata by Brhaspati (one *pramana*), Bauddha by Jina (here a name of the Buddha) (two *pramanas*), *Samkhya* by Kapila (three), *Naiyayika* by Akṣapada (four), *Vaisesika* by Kanada (five), and *Mīmamsā* by Jaimini (six) Then there are mentioned in order along with their doctrines in more or less detail the Śaiva the Brahma, the Vaiṣnava the Vaidika the Ajivaka whose position as set forth by the work of Maskari (*markali nul*) is described at great length (ll 106-65) the Nirgrantha (Jaina, called here Nikanda), the Samkhya, the Vaisesika and lastly the Bhutavadi (Naturalist) We are not in a position to decide if this interesting account of the different schools of philosophy with the exponents of which Manimekalai came into contact at Vañji can be accepted as representing the general situation at the time in the whole of South India, or whether it is just an academic exercise of the poet It is remarkable that the expositions of the followers of the three great gods of Hinduism are the briefest, counting only a few lines each while the Ajivika and the Nirgrantha get many lines each The omission of Buddhism from this canto is easy to understand as Buddhist philosophy gets a whole canto (xxix) to itself later and the whole poem is unmistakably Buddhist in its trend The evidence of the poem is clear that

all the main schools of philosophy were already well known in the South

The chief contributions made by South India to Indian philosophy lay however in the fields of the *Mimamsā* and *Vedānta* By the side of the widespread popular *bhakti* movement led by the Nayanars and Alvars the more speculative and philosophic foundations of Hinduism were strengthened by the two great *Mīmamsa* writers Prabhakara and Kumarila and the superb Vedantist Śankara Though a general historical account like this is not the place for a detailed exposition of their doc trines some account of their life and work will not be out of place Both Prabhakara and Kumarila expounded their ideas mainly in the commentaries they wrote on Śabarasvamin s *bhasya* on Jaimini s *Mīmamsa sutras* Śabarasvamin belonged to North India and perhaps to the fifth century A D His great commen tary (*bhasya*) is written in a supple concise style following an archaic dialectic method While following closely the original *sutras* of Jaimini Śabara may be said to inaugurate the polemic against Buddhism which continued ever after to be a distinguish ing trait of *Mīmamsa* It is however with Prabhakara and Kumarila that the system takes a definitely speculative turn Though they both expounded Śabara they differed perceptibly in their interpretations and became the founders of rival schools Though tradition makes Prabhakara a pupil of Kumarila his date is uncertain and modern criticism considers it very likely that he rather preceded Kumarila by some years and lived perhaps in the seventh century A D Prabhakara was also known as *Guru* and wrote two commentaries the extensive *Brhati* and the shorter *Laghvi* on Śabara both somewhat archaic in style and both carrying forward the polemic against Buddhist theses Kumarila also called Bhatta came in the eighth century and by his penetrating and daring interpretations welded the *sutra* of Jaimini and the *bhasya* of Śabara into a vast doctrinal system His work included (1) a verse commentary on the first quarter (*pada*) of the first chapter (*adhyaya*) of Jaimini known on that account as *Ślokavartika* (2) the *Tantravartika* on the remain ing three quarters of the first chapter and the second and third and (3) the *Tupṭika* much briefer notes on the remaining nine chapters of Jaimini s original

He is free in his criticisms of Śabara and irreconcilably hostile to Buddhism In spite of his difficult style his works are lively and alert and the *Tantravartika* is rich in linguistic data and local usages Both Prabhakara and Kumarila maintain the original atheism of the system and hold that Karma produces

its fruit without divine intercession Later writers like Khandadeva (*c* 1650) recoiled from this atheism and were profusely apologetic even for their restating the original doctrine Both Kumārila and Prabhākara also hold a realistic view of the universe They differ on the nature of the soul, whether it is pure consciousness or not and on the nature of *pramānas* (means of valid knowledge) Epigraphic evidence goes to show that Prabhākara was more commonly studied at first in South India at least in the age of imperial Cola rule, but in the long run Kumarila proved the more influential both within the school and without He is said to have used all means to discredit and weaken the Buddhists in the course of his extensive and scholarly journeys, and even persuaded the civil power to act against them If this tradition contains any historical truth, it only means that Kumarila acted in accordance with the spirit of his age, the age of the Nāyanars and Ālvars, who were ardent enemies of the non-vedic faiths of Jainism and Buddhism We have seen that tradition also credits Kumarila with the organization of the Smartas and their practical outlook in daily religion expressed in the worship of the five deities (*pañcayatanapuja*) It must also be noted that the notion of *mokṣa* or final release first appears in the Mimamsā system with Prabhākara and Kumarila In the original Mimamsā doctrine, the fruit of good *karma* was taken to be a happy existence in Heaven of which the duration depended on the extent of the merit of the *karma* 'During the interval between Jaimini and these thinkers', says Farquhar, 'Release had become a matter of such moment to the Hindu mind that it could no longer be evaded They teach that release is won when both *dharma* and *adharma* disappear, and that he who desires release should therefore perform only necessary duties' (*nityakarma*), and refrain from the sacrifices and other acts to which special rewards are attached in scripture Vedic religion, however, was nearly played out by the time of these thinkers because temple worship became more popular, and the sentiment against animal sacrifice gained strength from a new emphasis on *ahimsa* All the same, sacrifices did continue to be performed occasionally almost up to modern times and Prabhakara and Kumarila had many generations of successors in the field of Mimāmsa literature, at least to the end of the seventeenth century if not later, the names of the authors and their works are of no general interest and need not find a place here

We turn now to Śankara whose commentary on the *Vedānta* or *Brahma sūtras* of Badarayana is the earliest extant exposition of that often annotated text There must have been many earlier

glosses and commentaries in the centuries that elapsed between the composition of the Sutras and Śankara's day, and Śankara himself quotes some of them though not always by name The *Brahma-sūtras* themselves sum up a long development of the doctrine at the hands of successive scholars of whom no fewer than seven are named in the *Sūtras* Though the Upaniṣads teach no settled system but are just a record of many guesses at truth from various points of view, the *Sūtras* of Badarayana proceed on the assumption that the entire Veda is the Revelation of a harmonious system of truth Very soon the *Sūtras* themselves came to be looked upon as inspired work and seem to be mentioned in the extant text of the *Bhagavadgita* Some of the *Sutras* refute Mahayāna Buddhist doctrines and this indicates a relatively late date for the work, they may be regarded in any case as later than the *Mīmāmsa sūtras* of Jaimini The *Brahmasutras* are the most concise of all the texts of its kind expounding the *darśanas* and are so enigmatic as to lend themselves to an extraordinary diversity of interpretations Thibaut, who translated the *bhasyas* (commentaries) of both Śankara and Rāmanuja, expressed the opinion that while Śankara's exposition stands closer to the teachings of the Upaniṣads, Rāmanuja's is closer to the *Sutras* themselves For many centuries now, perhaps beginning from a time anterior to Śankara, the *Brahma-sutras* together with the *Upanisads* and the *Bhagavad-gitā* have been regarded as the Triple Source of Vedanta philosophy—*prasthāna-traya*, and in spite of its transparent *electicism the Gīta has been interpreted by each great Ācārya* from his own particular standpoint It is worth noting that the three distinct theories of the relation of the individual soul to the universal soul or Brahman which distinguished the great schools of Vedanta started by Śankara Rāmānuja and Madhva had been adumbrated in principle, even before Badarāyana's time by other thinkers cited by him To these later acaryas however belongs the credit of having erected finished systems out of hints thrown out by the earlier teachers[3] Śankara's system was anticipated more immediately by Gaudapada (mid eighth century) the teacher of Śankara's teacher according to tradition, his poem known as the *Mandukya karika* or *Agama śastra* (a free commentary on the Mandukya upanisad) forms *the first concise though at times obscure statement of the strict* monist doctrine afterwards fully developed in Śankara's works; here occurs the famous image of the circle of fire seen when

[3] See Farquhar sec 145

a brand is whirled rapidly (*alatacakra*) — a symbol of the mani festations of the phenomenal world without any real basis Some scholars hold that the work reflects and criticizes *Madhyamika* (Buddhist) doctrines in its last (fourth) section which refers to the Buddha by name in the penultimate verse while others think that Gaudapada s aim was to reconcile Vedanta and Bud dhism Some see good reason to place Gaudapada in the fifth sixth century A D and this if correct would contradict the tradi tion mentioned above that is if we accept the date usually assigned to Śankara 788 820 Ramanuja s theistic interpreta tion of the *sutras* was also anticipated likewise in three works (no longer extant) cited by both Śankara and Ramanuja viz Bodhayana s *Vrtti* Tanka s *Vakya,* and Dramida s *Bhasya* all commentaries on the *sutras*

Śankara was a master mind of undoubted originality who was content to claim for himself the humbler role of elucidat ing doctrines handed down by earlier masters He gave the final shape to monistic Vedanta and its central doctrine of Maya and also settled by example and precept the main features of the daily religion of the smartas There are several traditional biographies of the great man but few details of his life are known beyond doubt He is generally taken to have been a Nambudiri Brahmin from Kāladi on the banks of the Alwaye river in North Travancore to have lost his father early in life and to have turned Sanyasin and assumed the name Śankara with Govinda yogin a pupil of Gaudapada as his *guru* He became a brilliant scholar and preacher and produced a number of philosophical works marked by great intellectual capacity and an extremely eloquent style In his relatively short life he tra velled all over India propagating his new philosophy and achiev ing triumphs in public debates with the protagonists of rival doctrines He reorganized the ascetic order of sanyasis perhaps borrowing points from the organization of the Buddhist Sangha and founded a number of *mathas* in different parts of India for the continued study and propagation of his doctrine The best known of these *mathas* are those at Sringeri where he himself is believed to have spent several years Dvaraka Badrinath Puri and Kānci Within a short time of his death a pupil of his Śivasoma by name was spreading his philosophy in distant Kambuja across the seas Śankara s works include commentaries on the *Vedanta sutras* the *Bhagavadgita* and the principal Upanişads A number of vedantic works and stotras mostly in verse pass under his name the chief among the former is *Upa desa sahasri* a summary of his doctrines in verse Numerous

Śākta works in prose and verse also bear his name There can be no doubt that most of these minor productions are not really his and much more critical scientific study of them would be required before the genuine ones can be identified satisfactorily

Sankara holds strongly that while works (*karma*) may prepare the soul for the discipline of knowledge (*jnana*), it is only the latter that leads to and constitutes release (*moksa*) Hence when a man becomes Sanyāsin, he gives up sacrifices and other daily duties of a Hindu completely, only seeking knowledge as a means of release, this is typified by the laying aside of the sacred thread in the ceremony of initiation into a Sanyasin's life In this respect Śankara differs from other teachers of Vedanta who before and after him sought to give *karma* and *jnana* a coordinate status as direct means to salvation Śankara recognizes that the Upaniṣads contain two streams of thought; but he holds that one of them which affirms the reality of diversity is just a concession to common modes of thought and expression in the work-a-day world The essential teaching of the Upaniṣads is that of unity It is not however, bare unity which cannot exist apart from variety, the true description of the position is non duality (*advaita*) rather than monism strictly so called Vacaspati one of the great commentators on Śankara has said that he only denies the many but does not affirm the one The ultimate truth as realized by a liberated soul (*jīvan mukta*) denies the reality of the world but not of the individual soul (*ātma*) which in a state of release gets free of the limiting adjuncts (*upadhi*) and exists as Brahman 'We cannot therefore say that the individual self is false (*mithya*) as we may say that the world is false We can only say that it is not truly the agent the enjoyer, etc' To put the matter in other words 'Brahman is the sole reality and it appears both as the objective universe and as the individual subject The former is an illusory manifestation of Brahman while the latter is Brahman itself appearing under the limitations which form part of that illusory universe'[4] Again 'the individual self is Brahman itself and its supposed distinction from it is entirely due to the illusory adjuncts with which it identifies itself Man s ultimate aim in life should accordingly be to know and realize this truth' Formal study (*sravana*) reflection (*manana*) and meditation (*dhyana*) form part of the discipline calculated to serve the end Opinions differ as to whether a man should formally become an

[4] The citations are from Hiriyanna *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy* pp 157 8 169

ascetic (*sanyasin*) or not before entering upon this course of discipline Liberation comes finally by the grace of God

Sankara distinguished between supreme truth (*paramarthika*) and the truth of experience (*vyavahārika*) Some modern scholars hold that this doctrine of double truth has been drawn from Buddhist thought Again besides the supreme (*para*) Brahman there is recognized a lower (*apara*) Brahman wrapped in limitations and attributes (*saguna*), who is the world soul and a personal God From this lower standpoint the sutras recognize all the main features of orthodox Hinduism and Sankara accepts and supports them with arguments Among such features Farquhar enumerates 'the inspiration of the Puranas the permanent presence of all the traditional gods even though each is a transient being the visibility of the gods to the *rsis* in ancient time the eating of the sacrifice by the gods the assumption by a god of many bodies so as to be present at many sacrifices at one moment etc' Thus is popular religion sought to be reconciled with the highest metaphysic

Sankara commanded great respect in his day and the vast body of *smartas* in the South in Gujarat and many throughout Northern India became his disciples and acknowledged him as their religious head and his apostolic successors have continued to command the same position more or less to this day The literature of Advaita after Sankara is very extensive, it starts with the work of his direct pupils and their pupils and goes on in an unbroken stream till the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it comprises mostly commentaries super-commentaries and manuals which elucidate and restate the doctrine and sometimes add new refinements of detail and is not of much interest to the general reader An exception may be made in favour of the prolific scholar Madhava (brother of the erudite Vedic exegetist Sayana) who composed the *Sarvadarsanasamgraha* in the fourteenth century which summarizes the doctrines of fifteen philosophic schools arranged in an ascending order of values and beginning with the materialist Carvāka system One of the most recent works in the same line of general philosophical manuals is the *Saddarsana siddhantasangraha* (*summary of the findings* of the Six systems) of Ramabhadra dikṣita and a group of authors at the behest of the Maratha sovereign of Tanjore Shahji (1685-1711)

The Vedantic school most memorable after that of Sankara is that of Ramanuja the founder of Srivaişnavism who flourished about 1100 A D He received his early philosophical training in Kancipuram from Yadava Prakasa a teacher belonging to

the school of Śankara Ramanuja disagreed with his teacher and preferred the doctrine called *Visiṣṭadvaita* (modified monism or better qualified non-duality) which was being developed by a succession of teachers including Nathamuni and his grandson Yamunacarya *and of which he was himself to become the classical* exponent Ramanuja was still young when Yamunacarya died, but he had already reached eminence as a Vaisnava scholar and was invited to succeed Yamunacarya in the pontificate of Srirangam Very successful as teacher and writer he spent over twenty years in Srirangam He wrote three philosophical works of importance the *Vedarthasangraha* (summary of the import of the Veda) calculated to show that the Upanisads did not teach a strict monism as Śankara held a *bhasya* on the *Bhagavadgita* and the celebrated *Sribhasya* on the *Vedanta sutras* Ramanuja seeks to reconcile in an integral system a non-dualist metaphysic with devotion to a personal God The system is perhaps best stated in Farquhar s summary from Thibaut

There exists only one all-embracing being called Brahman who is endowed with all imaginable auspicious qualities The Lord is all pervading all powerful all knowing all merciful His nature is fundamentally antagon stic to all evil He contains within Himself whatever exists — material or immaterial — and is the internal ruler (*antaryamin*) of all Matter and souls as forming the body of the Lord exist in two different, periodically alternating conditions During the period of world rest *matter and souls being apart from bodies their intelligence is in* a state of contraction The Lord is then said to be in his causal condition When the period comes to an end creation takes place owing to an act of volition on the Lord s part Unevolved matter then evolving acquires its sensible characteristics while souls enter into connexion with bodies and their intelligence undergoes expansion

Owing to former actions souls are impl cated in the process of transmigrat on and from this Release is possible only through true knowledge of the Lord which rests on a study of the scripture and consists in constant devotion (*bhakti*) to him and *meditation (upasana) on him The released soul enters* parad se and enjoys intercourse with the Lord for ever

The Lord is a personal being Brahman is but another name for Narayana Visnu the god of the Vaisnava sect

The final teaching of the Upan sads according to Ramanuja as Hiriyanna puts it is that while Brahman the soul and the physical world are all d fferent and equally eternal they are at the same time quite inseparable The three entities are

different though they stand in a peculiarly close relation to one another Brahman as embodied in or inspiring the souls and matter is one The latter viz souls and matter are not identical with it or with one another If we like we may interpret the term Viśiṣtadvaita as signifying that there is nothing outside the embodied whole Again God exists for himself while eventually matter and souls exist for his sake The same obser vation we may state by the way applies to the individual soul and its body also In other words god together with the souls and matter is an organic whole just as the soul with its physical body is an organic unity

Ramanuja assigns equal importance as already stated to *Karma* and *Jnana* and to both the sections of the Veda dealing with ritual and Brahman He holds that the two are parts of one single doctrine the first expounding the ways of worshipping God the second dealing with His nature This goes of course against Śankara s view that the two sections of the Veda are different and meant for different sets of persons — the earlier for those who are preparing for Brahma knowledge by cultivating detachment (*vairagya*) through *karma* the later for those who aim directly at knowledge or realization of *Brahman* (*Jnana*) Ramanuja draws more upon the Puranas for support to his doctrine than Śankara Another difference between them is that while Śankara holds that the teaching of the Agamas is not entirely in agreement with the teaching of Revelation of the Vedas Ramanuja places both on the same footing

Ramanuja s *Śribhasya* is a work of magistral dialectic imbued with a passion much unlike the serenity of Śankara The commentary on the first sutra in itself comprises a com plete treatise setting forth fully all the rival theses and their refutations

The *Śribhasya* was the first sectarian *bhasya* and became the model for many others that followed The suggestion has been made that Ramanuja linked his sect with Vedanta to get rid of the reproach of heterodoxy that had attached to the Pancaratra worship in the temples of the Bhagavatas which lacked Vedic roots and stemmed apparently from ancient forms of worship traditional among Śudras or even perhaps pre Aryans his own scrupulous observation of caste rules about eating and intercourse with other castes may well have been intended as aids to the same result Though he held that the Śudras and outcastes may not read the Upaniṣads and the Veda he was eager to spread the doctrine of *bhakti* among them in the manner of the Alvars of old and in certain temples he arranged that the

outcastes should have the privilege of visiting them one day in the year

Rāmānuja travelled throughout India to disseminate his system and the great influence his doctrine commanded in North India in later times was doubtless due to the great success of his propagandist travels Tradition has it that the contemporary Cola king, usually taken to be Kulottunga I (1070-1120 A D), started persecuting Vaiṣnavism, and Ramānuja had to withdraw into Mysore territory where he won over the Hoysala prince Viṣnuvardhana (a name he assumed after he abandoned Jainism which he had originally professed) and organized a strong centre of Vaiṣnava learning and propaganda at Melkote He returned to Srīrangam some time after Kulottunga's death and himself met his end in 1137 He is worshipped as an incarnation in temples

Madhva (1199-1278 or some forty years later according to another computation) was the founder of the first sect directly based on the Bhāgavata-purana Born at Kalyanapura near Udipi in South Kanara District, he was named Vasudeva by his parents Like Ramānuja he received his early training in the system of Sankara But soon he developed violent differences with that doctrine and began to consider the great *ācarya* an incarnation of a demon while he looked upon himself as an *avatar* of Vayu Tradition credits him with a great capacity for physical endurance, and he became a *sanyasi* when he was quite young and came to be known as *Purna Prajna* (fully enlightened) In his writings he calls himself Ānanda Tīrtha A debate at Trivandram with an *acarya* of Sringeri ended in his discomfiture, and he was robbed of his library and subjected to much annoyance and persecution He toured Northern India where he had encounters with robbers, wild beasts, and hostile chieftains in the course of his journeys After resting for a while at Hardwar he retreated into the Himalayas for communion with Vyasa and published his commentary on the Vedanta-sutras on his return Back at Udipi again he built a temple of Krṣna and spent his time preaching converting and defeating 'illusionists' After a ministry of nearly eighty years and at the age of ninety six he disappeared as he sat teaching and was seen no more The centre of his religion is *bhakti* to Krṣna as taught in the *Bhāgavata*, Radha having no place in it, though she had gained a place as Krṣna's consort in Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda* and in the teachings of Nimbarka a little before and after Madhva's time All other avatāras of Viṣnu are revered, Siva is worshipped and the 'five gods' (*pañcayatana*) are recognized

Madhva's chief works are his *Bhāṣya* and *Anuvyakhyana*, both on the *Vedanta-sūtras* The *Bhāṣya*, a relatively short work in prose, is frankly dualistic in its interpretation, and contends with the aid of texts drawn from the Ṛg Vēda, the Upaniṣads, and the Gitā, but more particularly from the Purānas, the Vaiṣnava samhitās and other late works, that Madhva's explanation of the sūtras is the only correct one He also wrote commentaries on ten Upaniṣads, and an exposition of the Bhāgavata called *Bhagavata tātparya-nirnaya* and a companion volume on the Mahābhārata — all of which are held in much esteem by his sect called Madhvas Jayatīrtha of Malkhed (1365), who became head of the sect more than half a century after Madhva's death, wrote commentaries on Madhva's works which are also among the chief books of the sect Jayatirtha was a soldier as well as a thinker Another Dvaita thinker of note was Vyasa tīrtha (1460-1539)

Madhva's theology is similar to Ramanuja's He taught a Vaiṣṇavite faith where deliverance is the result of a direct perception of Viṣṇu who decides whether souls gain deliverance or remain for ever in Samsāra or lastly are condemned to an eternal hell Brahman directs the delivered souls to Brahmaloka, while Vayu incites the others to seek deliverance The Madhvas are confined to the south of the Vindhyas, mostly in Mysore, and their numbers in the North were never great

'Madhva holds that God, selves and the world exist permanently, but the two latter are subordinate to God and dependent on Him Brahman or God possesses all perfection and is identified with Viṣṇu The supreme directs the world He is endowed with a supernatural body and is regarded as transcendent to the world as well as immanent in it, since he is the inner ruler of all selves

'Madhva's system, as contrasted with other schools of Vedanta, is noted for its doctrine of five fundamental differences (1) between God and the individual self, (2) between God and matter, (3) between individual selves, (4) between selves and matter, and (5) between individual material substances

'For Madhva, everything on earth is a living organism The self is not an absolute agent, since it is of limited power and dependent on God It is by nature blissful, though it is subject to pain and suffering on account of its connection with a material body due to its past *Karma* So long as it is not freed from impurities it wanders about in changing forms of existence No two selves are alike

'God cannot be approached directly, Vāyu whose ancestry

can be traced to the vedic air being in Madhvas system the mediator The divine will is free It sets men free or casts them into bondage

'Salvation for Madhva consists in the perpetuation of the individual self in the condition of release where the self takes delight in adoration and worship of god'[5]

Though difference (bheda) is fundamental to the doctrine it does not necessarily mean the independence of the objects distinguished Particularly is this so in the case of God and *the world The difference between the two does not mean that* the world has nothing to do with him and can exist in spite of him That is taken to be independent here which can of its own *accord be know and act Such an entity is God alone Every* thing else exists knows and functions finally at his will[6]

Another development of Vaisnavism based on the Bhaga *vata was the rise from the close of the thirteenth century of a* number of poet saints whose popular songs stirred the life of Maharaṣtra as those of the *nayanars* and *alvars* had stirred the *Tamil country centuries earlier The earliest of them was* Jnāneśvara popularly called Dnyandev or Dnanoba a pupil according to some accounts of Visnusvāmi who was a dualist *and founder of a sect of his own Jnaneśvara was the author* of an extensive work in Maraṭhi verse on the *Bhagavad gita* it is known as *Jnānésvari* runs to 10 000 verses and bears the date 1290 It is advaitic in tone but lays much stress on yoga Jnanesvara was also the author of *Haripāth* a collection of twenty-eight *abhangs* (hymns) in praise of Hari (*Visnu*) Tradition makes him the greatest of a group of saints His poems are philosophical in tone and full of reflective thought and have had a great and lasting influence on the educated classes There need be no doubt that he was the coryphaeus of the whole bhakti movement of the Maratha country — (Farquhar) He was a true Bhagavata honouring Śiva as well as Viṣnu and following Śankara in philosophy He also wrote an advaita philosophical work *Amrtanubhava* in Maraṭhi verse The movement he thus began continued through a succession of saints to Tukaram the contemporary of Śivaji

Vaisnavism continued to be one of the dominant forces influencing the life of the people Occasionally the cult espe cially that of Radha tended to degenerate into excessive eroticism *This is particularly true of the followers of Vallabhacarya (1479* 1531) a Telugu Brahmin contemporary of Caitanya He was

[5] Cited from *A Source Book of Indian Philosophy* pp 508 9
[6] Hiriyanna *Essentials* p 190

born in Benaras, wrote several works in Sanskrit, including a commentary called *Anubhāṣya* on the Vedānta-sutras and became the founder of a system called Śuddhadvaita, i e, pure non-dualism as against Śankara's advaita which was soiled by the 'demonic' doctrine of Mayā He exalted Bhakti above knowledge and is reputed to have vanquished *smārta* scholars in debate at the court of Kṛṣnadeva Raya of Vijayanagar The ācāryas of the sect called themselves Mahārājas and lived luxurious lives particularly in western India The highest ambition of the followers of Vallabhacārya, both male and female, was to become *gopīs* (shepherdesses of Brndāvan) and sport eternally with Kṛṣna in his heaven called Vyāpi-Vaikuntha where there is a heavenly Brndavana and glorious forests an ideal which in practice corrupted the relations between the Maharajas and their disciples Such occasional aberrations apart Vaiṣnavism was in general a sweet and noble influence in social life The Rāyas of Vijayanagar were great patrons of Vaiṣnavism, in 1556 Sada-śiva, at the request of his minister Rāma Rāya gave thirty-one villages for the maintenance of the temple of Ramanuja and the institutions attached to it at Śrīperumbudur (near Madras)

The philosophy of Śaiva Siddhanta is based on the Āgamas Their origin is obscure and it is not known if they arose in Northern India or the South These are the Śaiva Agamas to be distinguished from the Vaisnava Agamas known as *Samhitas* and the *Śākta Agamas* or *Tantras* They are said to be twenty-eight texts in all, of which ten are held to be good (*sat*) Śaiva, and the rest bad (*asat*), classed as *raudra* (fierce) There are also a number of commentaries and *upagamas* (subsidiaries) making a total of 198 Like the Samhitas and the Tantras, the Āgamas are encyclopaedic in their contents, for instance they describe the construction of temples, the iconography of images of all kinds the details of daily religious observances, of magic of medicine and what not They are generally in verse though the earliest and least sectarian, the *Vaikhanasagama* already mentioned, is in prose They are all in Sanskrit and are taken to date from fifth to seventh centuries A D (Farquhar) or even from before the fifth century (Schomerus) The Agamas are first mentioned by Sundaramurti and the *Tirumandiram* of Tirumular (ninth century) is the earliest work to reflect the theology of the Agamas in Tamil Āgamic terminology is also found in the writings of Manikka-vaśagar who frequently speaks of the Agamas as revealed by Śiva and gives open and strong expression to his dislike of the Vedanta of Śankara

The first formulation of the philosophy of Śaiva Siddhanta

in Tamil was in the work of Meykandār (lit seer of Truth) a *pious Veḷḷala (farmer) who lived early in the thirteenth century* on the banks of the Pennār river, south of Madras He is reputed to have received instruction from saint *Parañjoti* (effulgent light) who was sent down from Mount Kailās, the abode of Śiva, specially for the purpose Meykandār's *Śiva Jñana-Bodam* (Instruction in Knowledge of Śiva), a translation into Tamil verse of twelve Sanskrit sūtras from the *Raurava-Āgama*, is looked upon as the fountain head of the dogmatics of the system The author has added *vārttikas* which explain and illustrate the argument of each of the sūtras The scheme of the work is simple, the first three *sūtras* affirm the existence of the three entities — God (*pati*), bondage (*paśa*), and soul (*paśu*), the three next define and explain their nature and interrelation, the third triad deals with the means of release, and the last with its nature The *Bodam* gave rise to a considerable body of *expository literature which need not be noticed in detail here* But three names stand out and constitute together with Meykandār *himself the four Santāna Acāryas (teachers in a conti*nuous series) of Tamil Śaivism They are Aruḷnandi, Marai*ñana-sambandar and Umāpati Aruḷnandi is reputed to have* been first the guru of Meykandar's father, and later the disciple of *Meykandar himself His Śiva-ñāna Śittiyār written altogether* in verse is an important statement of the doctrine following the order of *the sutras in the Bodam*, *this is preceded by a critique* of rival systems of which no fewer than fourteen, including four schools *of Buddhism and two of Jainism are passed under* review Umapati Śivacārya (end of the thirteenth and early *fourteenth century*), *was the author of eight works which, with* the two works just mentioned and four others, complete the tale of *the fourteen Siddhanta Śastras*

The progress of discussion led to the growth of different schools *within the fold of the Śaiva Siddhānta But in the main* the system sought, like other philosophies of religion, to determine *the relation of God, matter, and the soul It is realistic* and pluralistic like the Vaiṣnavism of Rāmānuja and Madhva, *and declared that matter and souls were, like God, eternal* The Absolute, through its 'grace form' is for ever engaged in the *rescue of souls from the bondage of matter and the three stains* (*malas*) which defile their purity 'As body and mind together *form a unity, so God is the soul whose body is the universe of* nature and of man He is not identical with either, He is not *their substance, but he dwells in them and they in Him* Advaita is not oneness, but inseparability To realize this union is the

high calling of the soul'. It is for the *guru* or teacher to let in the light, but Śiva is the source of all enlightenment, sole embodiment of intelligence and grace and hence the true object of all devout aspiration The system transcends caste and ritual, and calls for inner devotion According to one writer contentment, justice and wisdom are the flowers of worship

It may be noted by the way that the Śaiva literature of ancient Java portrays a stage in the development of the doctrine midway between the pre-sectarian Śaivism of ancient India and the Śaivasiddhānta

There was also a body of Sanskrit literature of Śaivism the first notice of which occurs in Mādhava's *Sarva-darśana-sangraha* But the most noteworthy book of the school was the *Śaiva-bhāṣya* of Śrīkaṇṭha-Śivācārya (c 1400) on the *Vedānta sūtras* The tradition that Śrīkaṇṭha was a friend of Govinda, the *guru* of Śankarācārya, and that he defeated the latter in controversy deserves no credit We do not hear of the Śaivabhāsya from any source for centuries after Śankara, and what is more, the work itself draws manifestly on the *Śrībhāṣya* of Rāmānuja and seems definitely to have been inspired by it The author meant clearly to do for the Śaiva Āgamas and Pāśupata theology what Rāmānuja had done for the Vaiṣnava samhitās and the theology of the Nārāyanīya section of the Māhābhārata His philosophic position is the same as Rāmānuja's and described by the same name Viśiṣtādvaita The *bhāṣya* was commented on extensively in the *Śivārka-maṇi-dīpikā* (the light of the gem of the Śaiva sun) *c* 1600 A D by the celebrated polymath Appaya Dikṣita

Another sectarian *bhāṣya* of Śaivism on the Vedānta sūtras was the *Śrīkarabhāṣya* attributed to Śrīpati Paṇḍitārādhya, tradition assigns him to the twelfth century when the Lingāyat faith was established, or according to the Lingāyat tradition, revived But the *bhāṣya* remained unknown till quite recently and its date is uncertain Its standpoint is described as *Śakti Viśiṣtādvaita*

Beginning from about the thirteenth century, but most prominently in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there flourished in the Tamil country a monotheistic puritan creed, that of Sittar (Siddhas meaning the perfected) who denounced idolatry and whose history is rather obscure Their teaching may well have been the outcome of Muslim and Christian influence on Hindu thought and practice Śivaprakāśa (Light of Śiva) of the early seventeenth century is known to have met a Christian missionary for a disputation and to have composed a polemic refuting the Christian creed—*Ēsumadanirākaraṇam* (refutation of the creed of Jesus), no longer extant The chief singers among

the Sittars are known by the curious names Ahappey (the inner demon) and Pambāṭṭi (the snake charmer) Many of the hymns of the Sittar are collected in the anthology known as *Śivavākyam* (Śiva s utterance) which contains also some orthodox lyrics On the other hand a number of beautiful lyrics which now pass under the name of the tenth century poet Paṭṭinattu Pillai show the unmistakable Sittar spirit Tattuvarayar who wrote against idolatry in the seventeenth century may also have been one of the Sittar What relation if any there was between these Sittar and those who are adepts belonging to a school of medicine (Siddha Vaidyam) is not clear

VI RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

In this chapter we shall give some account of the institutions of organized Hinduism, viz, the temple, its priests and daily routine, the festivals and *vratas* (vows) observed in temples and households, the *mathas* (monasteries) and orders of Sanyāsis (monks) and so on and describe briefly some of the more celebrated shrines of South India What the *caitya* and *vihāra* were in Buddhism that the temple and the *matha* were in Hinduism, and as the two religions were more or less competing for popularity and patronage, there ensued a great deal of assimilation in the observances and practices of both Without attempting to trace the obscure details of the stages of this process, our account will set forth the position reached finally in what may roughly be described as mediaeval Hinduism of the South

The temple stands at the centre of popular Hinduism Almost every village of any importance has at least one temple of higher Hinduism (*srikoyil* as it is called in Tamil inscriptions) situated in the middle of surrounding streets or in some other prominent place besides the shrines of village deities generally located outside the village near its boundary The latter class of shrines where cocks and sheep are generally sacrificed on Tuesdays, Fridays and some special occasions are most likely survivals of indigenous pre-Aryan religious practice, but even this sometimes takes on features from the higher religion by a process of 'Sanskritization' For the understanding of the temples we have the surviving monuments themselves in considerable numbers and the various builders' manuals or *śilpa-sāstras* These are relatively late works often written in incorrect Sanskrit, but they are records of an undoubtedly much more ancient oral tradition handed down for centuries by word of mouth from master craftsmen to their apprentices The Āgamas and some Puranas also have much to say on temple architecture and iconography The choice of sites for temples, the materials to be employed in their construction, and the rituals to be observed at every stage, the kinds of images to be installed in the different parts of the temple, together with the materials and modes of their fashioning are all prescribed in detail This apparently rigid control of the creative imagination of the architect and sculptor did not, in the best days of the

arts, prove an impediment to originality of conception or result in a dull uniformity in the temples constructed and sculptures produced A code and a discipline of mind and hand are no more obstacles to creativeness than the rules of cricket are to expertness in playing the game

The Hindu temple architecture found its maturest expression in the countries of South East Asia which accepted Indian culture with alacrity and cherished it for many centuries The stupendous *mandala* of Boro Budur (eighth-ninth century A D) in Central Java with its innumerable sculptures of the *jatakas* and the life of Gautama Buddha and many another sacred legend and the rows of seated Buddha images lining the galleries and *toranas* leading the devotee to the summit of the monument and of supreme wisdom is a veritable epitome of all that is best and most edifying in the religious thought and experience of India Likewise the famous Vaiṣnava sanctuary of Angkor Vat, twelfth century A D, is a colonial version so to say of the great contemporary Cola temples of South India This great temple, however, is dedicated not to the ancient Hindu god Viṣnu, nor even to any of his traditional incarnations, but to King Suryavarman II (A D 1118-1150) of Kambuja, identified, after his death, with Viṣnu, consubstantial with him and residing in his mausoleum fully adorned by gracious figures of *apsarases* just as Viṣnu resides in his celestial palace That the extensive Angkor Vat temple like Boro Budur represents a cosmic design and links up this world with the other can be seen from its very plan with its wall, its moats, its central temple and its gates the temples in the form of pyramids crowned or not by a quincunx of towers, the bridges across the moats with the *naga* balustrades, and the monuments so complicated as Neak Pan and the Bayon Here we have obviously the translation in stone of the grand myths of Hindu cosmology, calculated to realize here below in our world and on a terrestrial scale, the whole or part of the divine world

The mention of Angkor Vat and its funerary significance serves as a reminder that the Hindu temple is a complex institution of multiple origins Sometimes it is the continuation of a prehistoric shrine with animistic or totemic associations, elsewhere it is worship offered to a dead ancestor or a hero fallen in battle and it is to this class that we must perhaps assign the temples of South India built over the bodily remains of saints and princes often referred to in inscriptions as *palli-padai koyil* funeral temple, as also the shrines in South-East Asia particularly the *candis* of Java and temples like Angkor Vat in Kambuja which are regarded as the posthumous abodes of kings apotheo-

sized at their death or even during their life-time, the rest are the temples proper dedicated to divinities or epic heroes often on spots where particular myths or legends were localized by the imagination of the people, such spots would appear in many instances to have been chosen for their natural beauty or for their historic associations The capitals of great kingdoms and empires naturally attracted extensive royal patronage and came to possess great temple complexes Kañcipuram, Aihole and Paṭṭadakal, Tanjore, Gangaikondacolapuram and Madura are conspicuous examples, among others, from South India

There is also a symbolic aspect of the temple which is somewhat esoteric and not very widely known or regarded, but which merits at least a passing mention It is that the temple is a microcosm 'a kind of magic replica of some unseen region or sacred being' The proportions and the motifs employed are governed by this mystic necessity to conform to an ideal pattern calculated to secure 'the harmony of the structure with the cosmos that it reproduced' In such a conception, the emphasis on the vertical in 'the *śikhara* or spire, is literally meant to point to God to be the very embodiment of that magic axis that pillars apart heaven and earth and is variously symbolized by the mountain, the tree, or the universal Man — Puruṣa' 'The temple or *vimana* is at once the house and body of the deity, its fabric the very substance of the divinity'[1]

Though Buddhist art, perhaps as a result of Aśoka's magnificent lead, used stone freely in architecture and sculpture and developed to a high degree of perfection the art of scooping *caityas* and *vihāras* out of live rock, the use of brick and timber seems to have been continued for many centuries later in orthodox Hindu structures This may have been due partly to the respect for the practice of Vedic Aryans who used only these materials for the construction of Vedic altars and partly to the prejudice against following the lead of the heretical faith in its innovation Whatever it was, no Hindu stone monuments, rock-cut or structural, are found in South India dating from a time anterior to the sixth century A D, though stone had come into use even as *yupas* (sacrificial posts) in distant Borneo at least a century earlier The boyish glee with which Mahendravarman I Pallava announces at the end of the sixth century his achievement in having made a shrine to the Three Gods of Hinduism without the use of brick, timber or metal by scooping out a rock, and seems to describe himself as curious-minded (*vicitra citta*) on

[1] The citations are from *Rowland* Cf Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Part III

that account, gives a measure of the reluctance to change that prevailed at first But such resistance gives way sooner or later, and once the barrier is broken, the change sweeps in like a flood Soon building temples with cut stone became the rule and the art of excavating rock almost completely went out of fashion some time in the eighth or ninth century

The two last and most impressive achievements of Hindu rock-architecture were the Kailāsa temple at Ellora and the temple of Śiva Mahadeva at Elephanta The former was a creation of the Rāṣṭrakuṭa King Kṛṣna I (757-83), the date of the latter which cannot be far removed from this was perhaps included in an inscription which was destroyed in the ruthless desecration of the temple by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century *It is now taken to have been an excavation of the* latter part of the seventh century A D, by the Kalacuri kings of N W Deccan The Kailasa temple is reared on a most spectacular podium consisting of a row of deeply carved elephants, representing the Caryatids of the universe, as it were, 'nowhere has more adequate and dignified expression been given to the majesty and grandeur of the elephant In these figures there is an intimate feeling for the character of the elephant at once realistic and monumental testifying to the long and close companionship of the Hindu with this mighty beast' (Zimmer) The main shrine itself is an incredible achievement alike in architecture and sculpture and there are besides several lesser sanctuaries dedicated to the river goddesses and other Hindu deities 'forming an almost continuous cloister around the circumference of the great pit in which the principal temple is isolated' (Rowland) Sculptures of Saivite themes most celebrated among them being the Descent of the Ganges and the giant Ravana uprooting Mount Kailasa — the abode of Śiva and episodes from the *Ramayana* cover almost the entire wall space of the temple The entrance to the temple is on the west, and its main body measures roughly 150 feet by 100 feet, with projections at intervals throughout the entire height of the structure The substantial plinth is itself 25 feet high and marked by heavy mouldings above and below the elephants (and lions) already mentioned The stately *vimana* over the sanctum with its prominently projecting gable front and surmounted by a shapely cupola reaches a total height of 95 feet The achievement as a whole was unique in its excellence and contemporary inscriptions evince a vivid consciousness of this fact. The architect is said to have declared that he could not produce another monument like the Kailasa, and the gods of heaven in the course

of their aerial journeys in their *Vimanas* are said to have stopped their progress for a while and declared that such excellence as they saw below in the temple was decidedly unearthly in its character The temple at Elephanta is a cruci form hall (130 feet by 129) with three entrances The temple proper is a pillared hall roughly ninety feet on a side with six rows of columns sup porting the roof of the cave The main object of worship is attached to the back of the hall and *pradaksina* (circumambu lation) is impossible The temple excels all others of its kind in sculpture particularly those on the back wall There are three large square recesses separated by pilasters each bearing a huge *dvarapala* (door keeper) The panel on the left contains a representation of Ardhanari the hermaphrodite form of Śiva, while the corresponding one on the right contains figures of Śiva and Parvati In the central recess is the famous colossus a three-headed bust long called Trimurti but in reality a representation of Mahesa This great sculpture one of the greatest in world s art has evoked many appreciations and from our standpoint the description of Rowland may be accepted as one of the latest and best among them This triune conception presents the supreme form of Siva Mahadeva as the central of the three faces at the left in profile is the skull crowned head of Aghora Bhairava Śiva the Destroyer, and balancing it at the right the face of Uma the Beautiful wife or *śakti* of the third member of the Brahmanic Trinity As in some of the reliefs at Ellura (Ellora) the figures are set in an enormously deep box like niche so that they seem to emerge from an unlimited and nebulous darkness The three gigantic heads are perfect embodiments of the iconographic concept they signify the impassiveness and august serenity of the supreme Śiva made manifest the moving satanic countenance of the wrathful Aghora Bhairava and the youthful peace and beauty of the face of Uma

The beginnings of Hindu temple architecture in structural temples as distinguished from excavations in live rock are best traced in the Calukya temples at Aihole and its neighbourhood from about the middle of the fifth century A D Aihole in the Bijapur District is a city of temples and contains no fewer than seventy of them mostly of moderate size The work started there was continued in the neighbouring towns of Badami and Pattada kal (coronation stone [2]) Today Aihole is a squalid little village

[2] It is perhaps worth noting that the form of Paṭṭadakal which found entry in several standard works on Indian art (not Rowland s) is wrong *Paṭṭa* means diadem or coronation *da* is genitive suffix and *kal* means stone The word is Kannaḍa (Kanarese)

in rather wild country overgrown with prickly pear The plan of the Aihole temples is a natural development of that of two caitya halls built in brick about 450 A D, but surviving intact to this day perhaps because they were turned to Brahminical uses after the decline of Buddhism; these are now known as the Trivikrama temple of Ter and the Kapoteśvara temple of Chezarla, their names show that the former is a Viṣṇu shrine and the latter one of Śiva The usual caitya hall is preceded by a *mandapa*, a porch carried on pillars, sometimes walled in as at Ter The *mandapa* in front became a regular feature thenceforth of sanctuaries of all types, Hindu and Buddhist

The temple at Aihole known as Ladh Khan, usually assigned to the fifth century A D is a low flat-roofed building fifty feet square with a small square cella and a porch set on the roof at a later time to form an independent shrine of the sun Of the main temple three sides are completely enclosed by walls two of which carry stone windows perforated in a variety of beautiful designs On the fourth side, which forms the eastern front, there is an open porch on the pillars of which are figures of the river goddesses The interior is a pillared hall containing 'two square groups of columns one within the other' A large *nandi* (bull) fills the central bay, and the cella at the farther end is not a separate chamber leading off from the main hall, as one would expect but built within it against the back wall The entire disposition is totally inadequate for the purposes of a temple and Percy Brown suggests that it was just an Indian village meeting hall (*santhāgara*) converted into a temple Very different is the Durga temple another experiment seeking to adapt the Buddhist *caitya* to a brahminical temple The temple, perhaps of the sixth century, is an apsidal structure (60 feet by 36) with a large portico 24 feet deep on its eastern front making an overall length of 84 feet The temple stands on a high plinth with many mouldings The top of its flat roof is 30 feet from the ground A *sikhara* rises above the *garbhagrha* in the apse and there is a veranda roofed with sloping slabs carried on massive square columns with heavy brackets, and this forms the *pradakṣiṇa* path

The origin of the *śikhara* (pyramidal spire or tower) is disputed, some hold that it is a development from the *stupa*, others that it is a stone version of the procession car of wood, yet others see in it an imitation of the *kirīta* the towering headdress of Viṣṇu, lastly Coomaraswamy suggests more plausibly that it was due to the piling up of successive floors or *talas*, a suggestion supported by the figuration of the crowning *amalaka*

finial at each level of roof The *śikhara* is generally curvilinear in shape in Northern India but in the far South it rises by square terraces of diminishing size In the Deccan both styles were used sometimes the features of both being combined in one *śikhara* The *śikhara* of the Durga temple is perhaps a later addition in the northern style

Another temple very similar to the Durga temple is the smaller and simpler *Huccimalli gudi which contains one new* feature namely a vestibule or *antarala* between the cella and the main hall This became more or less the standard design for all later temples irrespective of their size

We need not follow the details of the evolution of temple architecture but just note the chief epochs in the history of temple construction The next stage in the development of Calukyan art is marked by the temples at Pattadakal about ten miles from Badami the Calukyan capital There are ten temples here four in the northern style and six in the southern The Papanatha temple (*c* 680) was perhaps one of the first attempts not quite successful to combine the features of the two styles in one structure the temple is too low for its length of ninety feet its tower in northern style too small and stunted and its *antarala* too big The Virupaksa (*c* 740) is a vast improvement in design and execution most likely the work of artisans *imported from Kancipuram it was built by a queen of Vikra* maditya II who invaded the Pallava capital and left a Kannada inscription there on a pillar in the celebrated Kailasanatha temple of which the Virupaksa is a close imitation The inscription records that Vikramaditya though he defeated Nandivarman II and occupied his capital for a time did no damage to the city pleased its people by his liberal gifts and restored to Kailasa natha and all other temples the heaps of gold that belonged to them It is reasonable to suppose that the conqueror carried away with him some expert workmen who helped him adorn his own capital with a replica of the temple he admired so much in his rival s capital

In the far South as has often been hinted before the Pal lavas bridge the transition from rock architecture to structural stone temples and their architecture and sculpture constitute a most brilliant chapter in the history of Indian art One remark able open air sculpture though not strictly in the line of temple development calls for special mention It is found in Mamalla puram (vulgo Mahabalipuram) and after having been long known as Arjuna s penance is now generally taken to represent the Descent of the Ganges (Gangavatarana) from Heaven to

Earth, in response to Bhagīratha's penance and calculated to redeem his ancestors from the curse of Kapila [3] Whatever it may be, this vast sculpture in high relief, nearly 30 yards long and 23 feet high covering the sea face of a cliff seems to have been connected with a carefully designed system to supply the town with fresh water drawn from the Palar river and distributed to all parts of the port There is a cascade in a natural fissure in the middle of the rock in which a band of Nāgas and Nagīs sport and symbolize the sacred waters and on both sides are sculptured figures of deities, human beings and animals of all kinds approaching or facing the fissure in attitudes of adoration 'In this wonderful relief', says Zimmer, 'as in the Indra relief at Bhāja executed some centuries earlier, the rock transforms itself into a telling procession of animated figures drifting by, *fleetingly passing, like a, flock of luminous clouds* The anonymous undifferentiated substance (*prakrti*) manifests every kind *of being The figures produced and animated by the divine* essence, the mirage personages of the cosmic dream of the God, are radiant with a blind delight in life, the enchantment of the spell of *māya* The heavenly couples of the gods and goddesses are borne along lightly They do not share the bulk and weight of earthly creatures They are made of subtle mind stuff (*suksma*) such stuff as composes the figures of our dreams and phantasies, or the divine apparitions that come before the concentrated inner vision of the yogi and devotee They are angelic figures full of sensual spirituality of a subtle, unearthly voluptuousness Shining forth from them is their delight in the glorious impalpability of their *bodies Their corporeal incorporeality is a sublime form* of *Maya* The melodious musical character of bodily charm is *rendered through a delicate articulation and joyous vitality of* their limbs and contours Distinctive bodily features are as far as possible ignored, the male and female figures resemble each other as closely as sex difference permits, they are like twin brothers and sisters conceived in the one spirit of subtle charm and unearthly bliss [4]

Among the free standing rock-cut *rathas* of Mamallapuram, popularly known as the Seven Pagodas the Dharmaraja is a good example of the *vihara* as against the *caitya* type It is a *small square hall in the centre with pillared verandas below and* a pyramidal *śikhara* above Its plinth has many strong mouldings and its porticos with lion pillars greatly improve the appearance Its niches carry superb sculptures of gods and princes includ-

[3] See the *Ramayana* Cantos 38-44 of Balakanda

[4] *Myths and Symbols* pp 120-21

ing one of the earliest representations of Ardhanarīśvara known in the South This type of design says Brown is not only an effective production in itself but it is a storehouse of pleasing forms and motifs besides being replete with potentialities

Among the structural stone temples of the Pallavas the most noteworthy are the Shore Temple at Mamallapuram the Talagirīsvara temple at Panamalai in South Arcot District — (Skt Talagiri and Tamil — Panamalai both mean the Palm-mountain) and the Kailasanatha and Vaikunthaperumal temples at Kancīpuram — all built in the eighth century The imperial Colas of Tanjore were the inheritors and continuators of the Pallava traditions in temple construction They built numberless stone temples throughout their kingdom which extended over the whole of South India below the Tungabhadra but to the end of the tenth century the structures were not very large The many small and medium sized temples of the Pudukottai region enable us to trace clearly the transition from the Pallava to Cola art forms in the different aspects of temple construction In the reign of Rajaraja I (985 1014) larger temples came into vogue and among these the most remarkable was the Tiruvalisvaram in the Tirunelveli District unique for the wealth and details of the iconography of the superb sculptures on its *sikhara* or *vimana* as it is called in the South The maturity of Cola architecture found its expression in the two temples in the Cola capitals of Tanjore and Gangaikondacolapuram the former completed by Rajaraja about 1010 and the latter twenty years later by his even more illustrious son Rajendra I The Cola style continued to flourish for nearly two centuries more and expressed itself in a very large number of temples of which however only two can be said to bear comparison with the great temples of the two capitals already mentioned, these are the Airavatesvara at Darasuram (Tanjore District) of the reign of Rajaraja II (1146 73) and the Kampaharesvara at Tribhuvanam near Kumbakonam (also in the Tanjore District) of the reign of Kulottunga III (1178 1218)

The Cola period was also remarkable for its sculptures and bronzes many of which are masterpieces of technical skill and aesthetic excellence Many complex pieces listed in the Tanjore inscriptions as portraying scenes of Saiva hagiology have disappeared but quite a good number still survive and can be seen not only in the temples of South India but in all the big museums of the world that carry an Indian art section Among these the images of Nataraja Siva as the Cosmic Dancer are in many ways the most remarkable Some of the best and biggest of these

Naṭarāja bronzes are still in worship and therefore inaccessible to the art connoisseurs of the modern world. What Zimmer says of the Naṭarāja bronzes is well worth reproduction. 'In these figures the contrast of the blissfully dreaming silent countenance with the passionate agility of the limbs represents, to those ready to understand, the Absolute and its Māyā as a single trans-dual form. We and the Divine are one and the same precisely as the vitality of these swaying limbs is one and the same with the utter unconcern of the Dancer who flings them into play'[5]

Under the Pāṇḍyas who followed the Coḷas in the thirteenth century in holding a supreme position in the Tamil country, and the empire of Vijayanagar that followed them in the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries the builders began to divert their attention to the outlying portions of the temple. They sought to emphasize the sanctity of the shrine by making the entrances to the enclosures containing it into vast towered gateways of imposing size and appearance, and thus the *gopuras* (entrance towers) came to form immense piles and provided a basis for a wealth of sculptured embellishments. Generally the two lowest storeys of the *gopura* are vertical and built of solid stone masonry, a stable foundation for the high pyramidal superstructure of brick and plaster. These *gopuras* are some of them firm and rigid in their contours with straight sloping sides while others have somewhat curved and concave outlines imparting to them an impressive upward sweep. In the latter class the sculpture is also of a more florid character.

The temples built in the western Deccan under the Calukyas of Kalyanī (973-1250) developed features which received their most mature expression in the Hoysala temples in Mysore. These temples often had their principal entrances not at the front but at the sides and the decoration of their external walls with architectural motifs dividing the wall into well proportioned areas tended to be singularly graceful and restrained while their *vimanas* (*śikharas*) were a compromise between the plain stepped storeys of the early Calukyas and the closely moulded tiers of the Hoysala style. The doorways both at the entrance and of the shrine-chamber, were very elaborately carved with fine detail and finish. Among the numerous examples of this style spread over the entire area of the Calukyan empire, the temples of Kasi Visvesvara at Lakkundi of Mahadeva at Ittagi and of Mallikārjuna at Kuruvatti are perhaps the most typical.

[5] *op cit*, p 156

The builders of Hoysala temples invariably used a dark stone of much finer grain than the large unwieldy blocks of sandstone used by the early Calukyas. The change of material made it possible for the masonry of the Mysore temples to be better finished and the sculptures to be carved in more minute and exquisite detail. In general, the Hoysala temple comprises a central structure surrounded by walls containing a number of cells with a pillared veranda or cloister in front. The main building contained the cella with a vestibule in front (*sukhanasi*) and connecting with a pillared hall (*navaranga*). In front of this there was often an open pillared pavilion, the *mukhamandapa*. In many cases, the Hoysala temples are not single but double, having all essential parts duplicated; indeed they are frequently even built in triplicate, quadruplicate, and occasionally even quintuplicate. Another notable feature was the star-shape of the external walls of the main shrine, set on a high platform the sides of which project or recede with lines and angles parallel to those of the building it supports. The platform is much wider than the temple leaving a flat surface all round to serve as the *pradakṣina patha* (circumambulatory path) for which there is no provision inside. The general treatment of wall surface is marked by a large number of horizontal friezes imposed upon one another. The walls of the sanctum are divided into three horizontal divisions while those of the pillared hall have only two; but a wide continuous cornice binds the two parts of the structure together. In both, a high and almost vertical basement nine or ten feet high, is made up of a number of sculptured animal friezes running right round the building. The lowest band is usually a procession of elephants; the next of horsemen. Then after another band of spiral foliage, and on a level with the eye is a wider frieze depicting a succession of Puranic scenes executed with great effect and a considerable wealth of detail. Above this is a border of *yalis* (mythical animals) with spirals of foliage issuing from their mouths, and crowning all is a frieze of *hamsas* (swans). The basement of the pillared hall is terminated above by a 'sloping seatback' (*asana*) above which rise the external pillars of the hall with their moulded shafts at regular intervals the spaces between the columns being filled by perforated screens.

The three horizontal divisions of the sanctum are even more ornate than the two of the hall. The basement which is continuous with that of the hall is just the same. Above it, the broad square space corresponding to that taken up by the pillars and screens of the hall is adorned with ornate niches containing

images of gods under foliated canopies, each one so elaborately chiselled (and often signed by the sculptor) as to constitute a more or less distinctive work. The rich effect of all this statuary is enhanced by the star shape of the structure which produces vertical planes like facets and provides an abundant variety of light and shade. The *śikhara* separated by the wide projecting cornice from the body of the temple below keeps the stellate formation, but its vertical lines are balanced by horizontal mouldings so that the whole tower appears as an orderly succession of diminishing tiers terminating in a low finial having the shape of a parasol at its apex. Miniature shrines and niches adorn each of these tiers. These Hoysala temples of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries though basically developments of the South Indian style, represent an art which applies to stone the technique of the ivory worker or the goldsmith, and is comparable to the art of the toranas (entrance gateways) of the great Sāñci *stupa* going back to the early centuries B.C. The wealth of jewellery borne by many of the figures, the variety of head-dresses and other details, are well calculated to give a fair idea of the social life of the times. The temple of Hoysaleśvara at Halebid, now half in ruins and lacking its entire superstructure, was perhaps the highest achievement of the school.

In the Kalinga kingdom (Orissa) many temples were built from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries by the rulers of the Eastern Ganga dynasty, all in the North Indian style. Bhuvaneśvar contains the main group of over thirty temples, but the Jagannath at Puri and the Sun temple at Konarak are the largest and most important. There is also a small group to the south of Mukhalingam on the coast of the Ganjam District; this group shows traces of both Calukya and Gupta influences in its decorative features. The Orissan temples are in general characterized by the plain treatment of the interior contrasting strikingly with the profusely ornamental surface of the exterior.

A variation of the Northern style flourished also in the north-west of the Deccan from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. Ambarnath in the Thana District, near Bombay, contains one of the earliest examples (1060); the temple is delightfully located by the side of a long deep pool; its two essential parts are both set diagonally astride the axis making an attractive plan 90 feet long and 75 feet wide; the temple is covered with intricate decoration of a lavish but tasteful design. In the latter part of the thirteenth century and early fourteenth were built in the same region a number of temples marked by their heavy proportions and a scarcity of external figure sculpture; they are known

as Hemādpanti from Hemādri or Hemadpant, the celebrated minister of the Yādavas of Devagiri, the reputed builder of several of these edifices and author of an encyclopaedic digest of religious and social laws known as *Caturvarga-cintamani* (the wish yielding jewel of the four aims of human endeavour) Examples of this style are found in the Berars also

Under Vijayanagar (1336–1650) temple architecture and sculpture attained a fulness and freedom of rich expression in keeping with the general consciousness of the great task of the empire, namely the preservation and development of Hinduism against the onslaughts of Islam Temples now became very elaborate both in structure and organization Old temples were amplified by the addition of pillared halls, pavilions and other subordinate structures The most notable of such additions was the *Kalyānamandapa* (marriage-pavilion) generally placed on the left in the courtyard of the temple as we enter it from the east This is a very ornate pillared structure, open on the sides, with a raised platform in the centre for the reception of the deity and his consort at the annual celebration of their marriage ceremony The goddesses invariably came to have separate shrines of their own in the precincts in the temple, a development which began in the late Coḷa period Another feature was the so-called 'thousand-pillared maṇḍapa', a huge hall with many rows of pillars In fact the varied and complicated treatment of the pillar was the most striking feature of the Vijayanagar style The shaft becomes just a core round which is grouped a vast amount of statuary of great size, sculptured in the round, the most conspicuous element is a furiously rearing horse rampant hippogryph or other upraised animal of a supernatural kind, the whole of it, pillar and sculptures, is carved out of a single block of stone Another rarer type shows a cluster of

Virūpākṣa II (1465-85) and scenes in relief from the *Rāmāyana* decorate the inner walls The last stages of Vijayanagar art are known as the Madura style, the Nayaks of Madura being their most reputed patrons In some ways it was a revival and continuation of the Pāndyan style We may note here in particular the provision of additional *prākaras* by means of concentric outer walls of enclosure, each *prakāra* wall having generally four *gopuras* at the cardinal points, and enclosing important adjuncts to the temple like a hall of thousand pillars, a sacred tank and so on Śrīrangam for instance has seven such concentric rectangular enclosures, the outermost one being 2,880 feet by 2,475 There is also a tendency to multiply the pillars wherever possible, and some of them begin to bear on their shafts more than life-size statues of deities or donors including ruling princes and their consorts

The temple of Madura is, perhaps, the most typical of the Nayak style, though Śrīrangam and Jambukeśvaram — both on an island in the river Kavērī near Trichinopoly, Tiruvannamalai, Rāmeśvaram, Cidambaram, Tinnevelly, Srivilliputtur and Tiruvālur are also well known The Madura temple is a double structure, one dedicated to Śiva as Sundareśvar (the beautiful Lord) and the other to his consort Minakṣī (the fish eyed goddess) , the two shrines take the largest space inside the main enclosure an area 850 feet by 725 feet within a high wall, with four large *gopuras* towards the centre of each of its four sides Outside the main enclosure but in axial alignment with the eastern *gopura* and separated from it by a street is the *Pudumandapam* (New Pavilion) known also as Tirumalai's choultry This is a large open hall 350 feet by 105 feet, divided longitudinally into a nave and two aisles by four rows of pillars, all very elaborately carved The pillars towards the centre of the hall bear life size statues of the Nāyak kings of Madura, the latest being that of Tirumalai Nayak, the builder of the *mandapa* The temple of Ramesvaram, planned and constructed on a unitary plan like the Madura temple is remarkable for its impressive pillared corridors which completely surround it besides forming avenues leading up to it These passages vary in width from 17 to 21 feet and are about 25 feet high , their total length is estimated to be about 3 000 feet

A word may now be said about the main image in the sanctum (*garbhagrha*) of the temple and the disposition of sub sidiary deities in relation to it The main image (*mula vigraha*) in a Śiva temple is usually a Linga while in a Vaiṣnava temple it is usually one of Visnu's manifestations (*avatārs*) or Visnu

himself modelled according to one of the many iconographic forms prescribed in the Āgamas In a temple dedicated to other deities like Kali, Durga, Subrahmanya etc it is their respective icons that form the main image All temples of any size contain shrines of subsidiary divinities connected in some way or other with the mythology of the central deity These minor gods are enshrined either in subshrines erected in the same enclosure as the main temple, or in niches on the exterior of the walls of the *garbhagraha* The positions of the sub-shrines and niches for these deities are prescribed in detail in the Āgama texts The *vimanas* (*sikharas*) over these minor shrines should in no case exceed half the height of the *vimana* over the sanctum In the course of centuries the number and description of the minor deities, and even their location in relation to the Central deity underwent changes, and it is easy to find differences in these matters between different localities and centuries To give one instance in the Sundarēśvara (Śiva) temple at Tirukkaṭṭalai in the Pudukkoṭṭai area, built circa 850 A D, there are seven sub-shrines dedicated respectively to Surya, the Saptamātrkas (seven mothers), Ganēśa, Subrahmanya Jyeṣthā — the elder sister of Lakṣmī and usually regarded as the goddess of ill-luck and sought to be propitiated for that very reason, Candra, and Candikeśvara The multiplicity of subshrines is a characteristic of early Coḷa temples In course of time the Saptamatrkas and Jyēstha, and in some instances Sūrya and Candra also are omitted, and new gods brought in in their places like Harihara, Dakṣiṇāmurti, Nataraja, or any of the canonized saints The Dēvī came to have a separate shrine to the north-west of the main shrine from the eleventh century The temples of Subrahmanya have generally eight, twelve, sixteen or thirty-two *parivara devatas* (subsidiary deities) Planets and Rsis also appear among such *devatās* in the later temples, and there are always local legends (*sthalapuranas*) to account for their presence

Repair and renovation of temples have continuously engaged the attention of princes and nobles, and failing them, the general public, at subsequent times No new temples comparable in size or art to those of earlier periods have come up Some new temples, relatively modest structures, use new material like cement concrete blocks and conform more to modern ideas of lighting and ventilation caring little for the 'dim religious light' bordering on semi-darkness even in broad daylight characteristic of the temples in the older tradition Several temples have lost their ancient land endowments, and got instead a relatively meagre money allowance for their use from government Govern-

ment also seeks now to control and regulate the administration of Hindu Religious Endowments which are still of considerable size

Hinduism is still a live force and there is no sign of its hold on the minds of the bulk of the population weakening in any way as a result of the impact of modern science and technology Famous shrines like Tirupati Śrirangam Śrisáilam Ramesvaram and Pandharpur (Maharastra) continue to attract pilgrims in large numbers throughout the year and collect a large revenue in the shape of offerings from devotees The practice is growing of diverting the temple surplus s to modern secular uses particularly in the educational sphere such as scholarships to deserving poor students feeding them or even making substantial annual contributions towards the maintenance of schools colleges and in some instance even universities The temple continues to occupy an important place in the social life of the surrounding community Its daily routine including the recitals of sacred texts and hymns during the daily *pujas* and on a larger scale on festive occasions engages the attention and provides the means of livelihood of thousands in the country Expositions of epics and puranas and dance drama and music have not altogether lost their traditional association with the temple though they are finding other and perhaps more popular and therefore lucrative avenues in the growing cities of the land

Before we take leave of temples and their organization a brief reference to the different classes of temple priests will not be out of place As a rule Brahmin priests who conduct worship in temples are socially not as high up as the other Brahmins who devote themselves to the practice of domestic ritual and sacrifice on Vedi lines (the *śrōtriyas* as they are called) and pursue careers of learning and teaching or even state service and other occupations The Smarta and Vaiṣnava priests recognize the three chief gods (Trimurti) Brahma Viṣnu and Śiva though the active worship of the first is not much in vogue Brahmā figuring more often only as a subsidiary deity on the exterior of the walls of the sanctum in Śiva temples The Śaivas however at least some sections of them hold Śiva to be the only god Both Śaivas and Vaisnavas attribute personality and qualities to the Supreme Being and all temple worship is directed to him The priests in Śiva temples are generally known as Gurukkal and those of Visnu temples as Arcakas Pancaratra or Vaikhānasa as the case may be In Viṣnu temples Brahmins repeat the Veda and *Tiruvāymoli* during worship while in Śiva temples though the Veda is recited by Brahmins the *Devaram* or *Tiruppadigam*

as it is described sometimes is recited generally to the accompaniment of music by *oduvar* (reciters) who are generally *pandarams* (non Brahmin priests of whom more presently) specially trained in schools maintained for the purpose The temples generally have a fixed image of stone wood or stucco in the sanctum (*mula vigraha*) which receives the main daily worship and an *utsava vigraha* (festival image) of metal which is also offered daily worship but which is meant primarily for being taken on processions during festival days Temples of any size have usually an annual festival for about ten days the *Brahmotsava* which generally ends with a car festival (*rathotsava*) in which the metal image is set upon a big wooden car which is dragged along the streets surrounding the temple by the people of the township all castes joining in the task The Pancaratra worship may be conducted by any Brahmin priest but the Vaikhānasa only by arcakas specially trained to it *Tulasī* (basil) is specially sacred to Visnu and *bilva* (bael) leaves to Śiva Brahmins generally ignore the lower deities though for gaining particular ends they occasionally offer special worship to some of them in forms prescribed by astrologers or adepts in the occult lore (*mantravadis*) Thurston has listed no fewer than twelve divisions or sub groups among the Smarta Brahmins four among Vadagalai Vaisnavas and six of the Tengalai group

In the Deccan under the Cālukyas of Badami and the Raṣtrakutas (750 950) both Śaivism and Vaisnavism flourished the former being perhaps the more favoured creed For the temples they erected at Badami Paṭṭadakal Mahakuṭa Ellora and elsewhere they imported Śaiva *arcakas* (temple priests) from among the acaryas on the banks of the Ganges and richly endowed the daily worship and the periodical festivals to be conducted by them At the same time Vedic sacrifices were not neglected *vratas* (religious vows) were observed and *dānas* (gifts) made The worship of Karttikeya attained much prominence in the Bellary region in the tenth century and two *tapovanas* (penance groves) were dedicated to him as the supreme deity a development initiated by some teachers from Bengal (Gaudadēsa) as recorded in contemporary inscriptions It is possible that several other facts like these have escaped the records and that developments in Hindu religious practices in different parts of India reacted on one another much more intimately than we realize from the extant sources

The Dikṣitars of Cidambaram claim to have come down from Benares three thousand of them including their leader who was no other than lord Śiva Naṭaraja Himself and settled in

Cidambaram They enjoyed the prerogative in olden days of crowning the Coḷa emperors They wear a top knot of hair on their head in front like the Nayar and Nambudiri of the West Coast They take turns in the service of the Natarāja temple and live on the perquisites of the temple which they own and manage They marry early in order to qualify for a share in the perquisites The temple has no lands government grants or endowments, but the regular flow of gifts of devotees from all grades of society enables it to be fully supplied with sumptuous food offerings both during daily worship and on special festivals There are at present about 250 shares claimed by the Dikṣitars The temple is exceptional in this respect as Śiva temples usually distribute only holy ashes as *prasadam* (lit grace) unlike Viṣṇu temples where tasteful food of different kinds is regularly offered to the deity and then distributed among the worshippers Twenty Dikṣitars are always on duty for twenty days at a time and perform their function in five parties of four doing the *pujā* for four days each in the different shrines The Dikṣitars claim this monopoly of worship for themselves and do not permit even the Sankara acaryas (successors of the great founder of Advaita) to offer worship to the deity directly — a privilege which they enjoy in every other temple

Similar to the Dīkṣitars in some ways but very different from them are the Śoliyars who are in charge of the Tiruvanaikka temple and of whom there are six sections They wear front locks and take turns in the puja like the Dikṣitars Like the Gurukkals they have an initiation (*dīkṣa*) enabling them to enter on their duties as *pujaris* or *arcakas*, but otherwise have little general education They count about 300 men and women and children and the arcakas do not intermarry with other Śoliyars Another group of Śoliyars are in another shrine Avuḍaiyarkoyil Canakya is believed to have been a Śoliya and a Tamil proverb says that the tuft of a Śoliya does not shake in vain implying that his exertion is never wasted but invariably has a purpose which it generally achieves Other priestly sections with noticeable peculiarities of their own are the Mukkanis of Tiruccendur Cochin and Travancore the Sanketis of Mysore who speak a strange mixture of Tamil and Kannada and the Aradhyas of Northern Circars found also to a less extent in Cuddapah Kurnool and Mysore who wear both the sacred thread and the linga and worship Ganapati

The Panḍarams who have been briefly mentioned before are the most important among the non brahmin temple priests They are recruited from among the Saiva Sudras and are known

to drink liquor and eat meat furnished by any respectable Sudra Tiruttani (Chittoor District) is an important centre for them One section among them known as Tirumanjana (bathing) pandarams bring water for bathing the deities in temples Tambirans form another section who act as managers of temples and heads of *mathas*

There is another caste also known as Pandarams who are staunch Śaivas and strict vegetarians lead a celibate life wear the lingam and accept initiation from Dikṣitars There are two classes among them distinguished by the epithets *abhiseka* (corresponding to *Tirumanjana*) and *desika* There are also mendicants drawn from all castes who eat meat The Lingayat pandarams are different from the true Lingayats who venerate the *Jangam* (ascetic) and use water with which his feet have been washed for *abhiṣeka* to the lingam and observe no pollution — all respects in which they differ from Tamil Lingayats Several derivations have been suggested for the word Pandaram in this context — one tracing it to Panduranga another to Bhandara (treasury) and a third to a yellow powder called *pandaram* kept in a little box and given in exchange for alms but the powder may well have got its name from its users In some Śiva temples Brahmins function under the control of a Paṇḍaram who is the head of the organization It is a question if the Pandarams are or are not *Lingāyats* There are numerous married Pandarams who have *kudumi* (tuft) and wear ashes and sandal *pottu* (*tilak*) on the forehead, the less numerous celibates wear orange robes (*kaṣaya*) carry iron tridents (*trisula*) and *dandayudha* (lit stick weapon) and sing popular Tamil hymns Married men also beg with a bell metal gong and a wooden mallet Both classes bury the dead and erect a linga on the burial spot The Paṇḍara Sannidhis heads of *Maths* are celibate and scholarly being well versed in Puranas and Agamas They are the Tambirans proper but the title is often usurped by uneducated beggars, the Vairavis are a sub-caste of Pandaram

The Pallis or Vanniyans claim descent from the Kṣatriyas of Agnikula (fire race) and Pallavas Kulaśekhara alvar is said to have been the king of the caste The Paḷḷis have an annual ceremony in the Parthasarathi temple in Triplicane (Madras) and some other temples and make camphor offerings in the Mylapore Śiva temple There is a Paḷḷigopuram in the Ekamranathar temple at Kancipuram Vanni is the name of a District in N E Ceylon and Sambhus and Śambuvarayas (mediaeval chieftains) are said to have been connected with them To the

Vanniyans belongs the privilege of fire-walking in the temple at Tirupporūr near Madras They are priests in the Draupadi temples in South Arcot District, Draupadi being the common wife of the five Pāndava heroes of the Mahābharata, currently *worshipped as a goddess in the 'Little Tradition', in these* temples fire-walking and recital of a part of the Great Epic (Mahabhārata) are part of the Draupadi festivals both here and in Madras city Some sections of Vanniyas wear the sacred thread and even claim to be Brahmins, forbid widow remarriage and are vegetarians Palli Poligars, feudal chieftains, with high-sounding titles were known The Pallis of Kumalam a village in S Arcot, are known as Kovilar (templars) and priests of the Pallis, like the Bhattar (priest) Brahmins they are well versed in temple ritual, and the Veda, they claim to be Ksatriyas and adopt the titles of Rayar, Nayakkar, Varma, Padaiyacci, Kandar *etc , others call them Kumalam Brahmins They belong to the* left hand section of castes,[6] and are generally Saivas or Vaisnavas, *but they also practise demonolatry, and worship village* deities like Mutyālamma, Mariyamma, Ayyanar, Munisvara etc Śakti worship with bloody sacrifices is also known They use the Karagam, a pile of seven pots set one upon another and decorated with flowers and garlands, in their festivals They practise both burial and cremation The Panans, a division of Paraiya (drummers) are said to be related to them

By the side of the temple, the *matha* (monastery) which corresponded to the *vihara* of Buddhism, was an important institution basically religious, but with many ramifications in the intellectual and economic life of contemporary society The life of the ascetic had a strong appeal to the imagination of the people and one of the most common forms of religious charity was to provide for the feeding, regular or occasional of ascetics in temples or *mathas* Vaisnavism was on the whole moderate in its practice of the ascetic ideal, and did not give rise to the bizarre manifestations of it associated with Śaivism The Vaiṣnava endowments generally provided for the feeding of Śri Vaiṣnavas and *tadar* (dasas) or of Brahmins who had a perfect mastery of the Veda The *dasas* are itinerant Vaiṣnava mendicants, reinforced by idle Sudras, branded by *gurus* of the Tirupati *and other shrines as dāsas, they sing sacred songs and keep* young bulls trained to perform tricks They are generally Ten-

[6] In South India the Castes were grouped as two confederations so to say of the Right Hand and Left Hand and the differences among them generally over religious or social trifles often led to violence as is seen from frequent entries in the Records of Fort St George (Madras)

galais and wear garlands of *tulasi* (basil) beads, there are six subdivisions among them who neither eat together nor intermarry. Tradition avers that Śankara found the Vedāntic ascetic orders in confusion and regulated them, dividing them into ten groups each placed under one of his disciples and named after them, all of them came thenceforth to be known as Dasnāmis, Sanyāsis of ten names[7] There are also Sanyāsinis (nuns) Śringeri matha of which Śankara was himself the head is the chief monastery, and its ruler is the supreme pontiff of all *advaita* sanyāsis It may be noted that the dualist Madhva Sanyasis also adopt these ten suffixes, Madhva himself being a Tīrtha Śrī-vaiṣnava sanyāsis, an order to which only Brahmins are admitted, carry a triple *danda* in contrast to the single *danda* of the advaita sanyasis, and hence they are respectively known as *Tridandis* and *Ekadandis* Śaivism was in marked contrast with the Advaita of Śankara

The ascetics owned no property themselves but their *mathas* often owned vast estates earmarked for their maintenance and the encouragement of learning and the arts The climate of opinion has always been favourable to the ascetic ideal and a fair, though varying proportion of the population has at all times taken to the life of pious, if not uneasy, poverty All religious systems applauded it The well-to do householder has ever been ready to make gifts (*dana*) to the orders, because he was assured of a good berth in the other world as much for his *dana* as the ascetic for his renunciation and austerity There was no doubt many a hoax masquerading under the garb of asceticism who often became the butt of a good joke among the populace whose shrewd common sense got at the truth in such cases But it is only very recently that in the name of economics we have come to look upon each man as a hand and a mendicant as an idle hand By and large, the ascetic ideal did much good to the people by stressing the higher values of the spirit and by giving them a ready-made philosophy with which to face the hard realities of life It is still cherished by the masses of the people in the villages, though perhaps not so much in the big cities

The history of the *mathas* and *guhais* (as they are sometimes called in the inscriptions) has not been studied as much as it deserves to be, and cannot be pursued here in any detail Their origin is definitely some centuries anterior to the reign of Rājarāja I, but their number and influence steadily increased under him and his successors Starting from important centres

[7] The ten names are Tīrtha Āśrama, Sarasvatī Bharatī Vana, Araṇya, Parvata Sāgara, Giri and Puri

where one or more *mathas* were established in the first instance, the movement spread all over the land until almost every important temple came to possess one or more *mathas* functioning in close proximity to it In course of time they grouped themselves around a limited number of *santānas* or successions of *gurus*, each having a central *matha* which was looked up to for guidance by a number of subordinate *mathas* in different places Many of these, the Tamil Śaiva *mathas* proper, were confined to the Tamil country Others, however, maintained wider contacts and prided themselves on their connection with Āryadesam (North India), Banaras, or even Kashmir Some Northern *mathas* like the Golaki commanded a considerable following in the South Both epigraphy and tradition point to a fairly large immigration of Bhattas from North India to important religious centres in the South, particularly to Srirangam, immigrants from Kashmir (Kaśmīradeśam) are specially mentioned in Śrirangam as in other places in the Chingleput and Ramnad Districts Generally the *mathas* which maintained their North Indian contacts belonged to the various schools of Paśupatas, Kapalikas and so or *Mathas* often helped religious pilgrims in their progress from one shrine to another by supplying salt, medical help and other specific services as required, and there were endowments ear-marked for these services The *mathas*, like the temple, had a strong multi purpose social side to their work and the ascetics inhabiting them often devoted themselves to feeding the hungry, tending the sick, consoling the dejected and educating the young ones, in the process several Buddhist shrines and *viharas* were turned to Hindu uses when Buddhism ceased to be an active force in the land

The *mathas* are still continuing to be active agencies for the promotion of traditional learning and social welfare Modern conditions are perhaps growing steadily adverse to their work and outlook, and the State has begun to claim and exercise the right of supervision and control of all religious endowments by legislation and executive action Even in ancient days surplus funds owned by these institutions were invested with merchants for fixed rates of interest or advanced as working capital to agriculturists on agreed terms, there is therefore no new principle involved in the diversion of surplus funds to modern uses like the award of scholarships to pupils in modern schools and colleges and even supporting the institutions themselves, provided the main activities for which the *mathas* were originally meant and which they are still keen on carrying out are not starved on this account Among the *mathas* still actively functioning in

South India may be mentioned the Advaita *mathas* of Śringeri and Kañci, the Vaisnava *mathas* of Ahobalam (Kurnool) and Parakāla (Mysore), both Vadagalai, those of Vanamamalai (Tirunelveli District), Śriperumbudur (Chingleput District) and Tirukoyilur (S Arcot) — all Tengalai, the Madhva *mathas* include the Krsna Matha at Udipi (South Kanara District) with its eight branches the Vyasaraya Matha, the Uttaradi Matha and the Raghavendraswami Matha, and among the Tamil Śaiva Mathas those of Tiruvaduturai Dharmapuram and Tiruppanandal, all in the Tanjore District In their turn the *mathas* are trying to take account of the impact of modern forces and move with the times, but without in any way departing from their original *raison d'etre* They seek to combine a modicum of modern studies with traditional studies in the educational institutions in their charge They seek to distinguish the essentials of religion from the externals and bring about a common understanding and co-operation among *mathas* of different schools — a thing undreamt of in the old order They seek to check the forces of division in the Hindu fold and secure a fresh and vital unity on a ground of social philosophy and ethics commonly accepted by them It is too soon to judge the results of these reformist endeavours

VII MOVEMENTS AFTER A.D 1000 THE ROLE OF VIJAYANAGAR (1336 1650) REFORM AND MODERN HINDUISM

Under the Colas of the house of Vijayalaya (acc 850 A.D) may be said to commence the Silver Age of South Indian Hinduism *Precise dates are difficult in the present state of the* evidence, but we may still be reasonably certain that the sacred hymns of the *nayanars* and *alvars* in many ways the most characteristic product of Tamil religious experience were arranged in canonical form sometime in the eleventh century

Nambi Andar Nambi the author who arranged the Saiva canon substantially in the form in which we now find it was most probably a contemporary of Rajaraja I (985 1014) and his son Rajendra I (1014 44) The account of his life and work *given in a short Tamil Puranam attributed to Umapati Śiva* Acarya (early fourteenth century) seems to conserve in the *midst of many legends a fairly correct account of the growth* of the canon in the hands of Nambi himself and his successors The inclusion in the canon of Nambi s own poems and those of other writers (e g Karuvur Devar) manifestly later than Rājaraja s time and the titles *Abhaya* (fearless) and *Kulaśekhara* (head ornament of the family) given by Umapati to the Cola king who was Nambi s contemporary may well imply a later date for the redaction of the canon Even in Nambi s time difficulty was felt in making the collection complete as may be seen from the hymn of Jnanasambandar on Tiruvidaivayil which finds no place in the canon but is found engraved on stone in the temple concerned as is common in such conditions in India a legend was invented to cover up the incompleteness of the collection and it was said that the bulk of the palm leaves on which the poems had been written had been destroyed by *termites in their original store room behind the Nataraja temple* at Cidambaram

The practice of reciting these hymns in temples had come into vogue long before the time of Rājaraja from the late Pallava *period when the inscriptions begin to include the reciters among* the regular employees of the temple The inference is clear *that the hymns had gained the status of divine literature by that*

time. From the time of Parāntaka I (907-55) Coḷa there is a regular series of endowments recorded in the epigraphs of the Coḷa — and Toṇḍaimaṇḍalams (i e roughly Madras, Chingleput, S Arcot, Tanjore and Trichinopoly Districts) for the recitation of these hymns in temples to the accompaniment of instrumental music The mention of a Dēvāranāyakam Superintendent of Dēvāram, in the reign of Rājēndra I, implies a regular *State* department regulating this work and securing its proper performance, the same department may have looked after the dance and music performances in temples which were also often separately endowed

Lyrical hymnology continued to flourish in the early imperial Coḷa period, and Paṭṭinattu Pillai who probably lived in the tenth century, was the author of some beautiful devotional verse Paṭṭinam or Kaveri ppūm paṭṭinam was the place of his birth and hence his name meaning the Pillai (son) who belonged to Paṭṭinam His hymns are five in number, which along with the work of ten minor authors and the ten hymns of Nambi Āndar Nambi himself constitute the eleventh book of the Śaiva canon The *Tiruttondar Puranam* or *Periya Puranam* of Śēkkilar, a long hagiology in epic style composed in the reign of Kulottunga II (1133-50) constitutes the twelfth and last book of the Canon To complete the account of the Śaiva canon it may be noted that the ninth book comprises hymns by nine authors Among them figures a Cola king Gandaraditya (Sun among heroes), son of Parantaka I, both he and his queen Śembiyan Mahādēvī (the great queen of the Cola) have a better place in religious than in political history We must also notice Karuvur Dēvar (the lord of Karuvur, the place of his birth in Trichinopoly District) who is reputed to have been Rajaraja's spiritual adviser and who has hymns on the temples of Adityeśvara in Tirukkalandai the Great Temple of Tanjore and its counterpart in Gangaikondacolapuram — all constructions of the Cola kings more or less contemporary with Karuvur Devar In the hymns of the ninth book, the largest number celebrate Koyil (Cidambaram)

The history of Vaiṣnava hymnology in the period is quite similar Tradition confers upon Nathamuni Ranganathamuni is the full name, the honour of having done for Vaisnava lyrics what Nambi Anḍar Nambi achieved for the Śaiva ones The Anbil copper plate grant of Sundara Cola s reign (956-73) mentions a Śrinatha, he may well be the same as the Vaisnava saint Nathamuni (i e Saint Natha) who thus finds a place early in the tenth century This record provides a good glimpse into

the role of Vaiṣnavism in the social life of the time, for it bears testimony to the strong Vaiṣnavism of the family of Aniruddha, the minister of Parāntaka II Sundara Cola, the glory of Aniruddha's father was his great learning and the number of his pupils, Aniruddha's mother and *her* father were staunch devotees of God Ranganatha, his great grandfather Ananta extended considerable support to the poor and the indigent Nathamuni was *the first of the great succession of Acaryas who carried forward* and completed the work started by the Alvārs of an earlier time His birth place was Vīranarayanapuram (South Arcot District), the place is now known as Kattu mannar-koyil (i e the temple of Kṛsna in the forest) perhaps the original name of the village, Vīranārayana was a title of Cola Parantaka I (907-55) as also of a slightly earlier Pandya king a contemporary of the father of Parantaka I, we may therefore assume that Nathamuni belongs to the late ninth or early tenth century The story is that Nathamuni once heard some visitors to his place from Kurugur (Tirunelveli District) *recite a hymn of ten verses from the* Tiruvaymoli the 1000 hymns composed by Śathakopa, also called Nammalvar Captivated by the melody of the hymn and *noticing from its last verse that it comprised only ten out of a* thousand verses composed by Nammalvar, Nathamuni undertook a journey to Kurugur, the birth place of Nammalvar, in the hope of *discovering the whole collection there Kurugur, it may be* mentioned by the way, has the alternative name of Ālvar-Tirunagari the sacred city of the *alvar*, in memory of the great saint and composer After worshipping *Viṣnu in that city*, Nāthamuni resorted to the foot of the sacred tamarind tree of the place in his desire to meet the *ālvar*, great was his grief and disappointment when he found his *yogic* powers unequal to the task of invoking a vision of Śathakopa (Nammalvar) He then adopted the plan of reciting 12 000 times the hymn of Madhurakavi (lit sweet poet) on his *guru* Śathakopa, pleased by this, both Śaṭhakopa and Madhurakavi appeared before Nathamuni and imparted to him the knowledge of the works of Śaṭhakopa with their full import together *with all the rest of the hymns Thereafter* Nathamuni stayed at Kurugur meditating upon the new knowledge he had acquired until he was summoned by Vīranarāyana Kṛṣna *the god of his native place to go back to it There he* collected a band of disciples and made them sing these hymns to divine tunes All this is of course legend but typical of the Indian way of *keeping fresh the memory of great men and their* deeds We may infer surely that the Vaisnava canon was arranged and its musical modes settled by the first great Ācārya

of the second great division in the history of Vaisnavism in South India the one that falls between the creative age when the hymns were sung and that of the great commentators who came long after Ramanuja We have epigraphic evidence that at least from the time of Rajaraja I Cola the hymns were recited in Visnu temples during worship and in festivals just as the Śaiva hymns were recited in Śiva temples One inscription of A D 1242 mentions a choir of fifty-eight Brahmins reciting *Tirumoli* (sacred word short form of *Tiruvaymoli*) in Kancipuram

Besides arranging the Tamil canon Nathamuni wrote a number of works in Sanskrit expressing the clear need he felt for the support and guidance of a living God and pointing the way to a philosophical justification of the path of love (*bhakti*) His grandson Alavandar also called Yamunacarya in memory of his visits to the sacred spots of Krsna s youth on the banks of the Yamuna (Jamna) river was the next great name in the succession before Ramanuja In his early years he was a man of the world but a follower of Nathamuni called him to the higher life He then turned ascetic and led the life of a religious teacher gathering disciples round him and preaching writing and conducting debates In his Sanskrit writings often cited by Ramanuja he sought to establish the real existence of the supreme soul and the eternal independence of the individual soul [1] Yamunacarya is said to have met Ramanuja as a young student studying in Kanci the philosophy of Śankara but unwilling to disturb his studies he simply uttered a prayer for the increase of Vaisnavas and went back to Śrirangam Then Ramanuja developed differences with his *guru* Yadava Prakasa which led him to the Śrirangam school of philosophy

In religion as in politics the age of the Imperial Colas (950 1250) was marked by a notable expansion of external contacts and a remarkable mutual tolerance and respect among the d fferent religious denom nations as a rule An important exception is the persecution of Ramanuja and his followers by some of the later Colas of which Vaisnava trad t on has pre served a rather vivid memory Rajendra I (1014-42) provided for the annual supply of a large quantity of grain as *acaryabhoga* to Udaiyar Sarva Śiva Pand ta who was performing worsh p in the Tanjore temple and his pupils and their pupils whether they lived in the Aryadesa Madhyadesa or Gaudadesa In 1214 we find the Kolla matha of Benares represented by its disciples in the Chingleput District in the Santana of Lakṣadhyaya

[1] Perpetu ty wh ch is a form of t me is different from etern ty wh ch is t melessness —Radhakr shnan *The Brahmasutra* (1960) p 185

Iravalar, the Bhiksa matha of Benares is likewise represented in the Tanjore District three years later There is also a tradition that Rajēndra I imported large numbers of Śaivas from the banks of the Ganges and established them in several parts in the Cola country The kings as a rule patronized all persuasions without discrimination The sculptures of Rajarāja's Great Temple in Tanjore include both Vaisnava and Buddhist themes His sister Kundavai built three temples — one to Śiva, one to Viṣṇu and a third to Jina — all in one place Rajarajapuram (now Dadapuram) in the Tanjore District, and her gifts to all these shrines are recorded in one inscription, it contains one of the earliest known references to several *namams* (the Vaisnava caste mark) made of gold, in the list of jewels of the Visnu temple Many temples contained shrines both of Śiva and Visnu the most conspicuous instance being the Cidambaram (South Arcot) temple, the relative positions of Nataraja (Śiva) and Govindaraja (Visnu) in this temple is brought out with great precision in a verse in the *Tirukkovaiyar* (attributed to Manikkavasagar) which depicts Visnu as lying in front of Nataraja absorbed in the contemplation of the foot lifted in his dance by Nataraja (the lord of the Dance) and supplicating him for a view of the other foot as well In later times this proximity of the deities led to acrimonious disputes between the devotees in which Govindaraja was pulled out of his place by Kulottunga II (1133 50) and thrown into the sea, the image was restored to its place in the reign of Acyuta Raya in the Vijayanagar period, and in more recent times became the subject of litigation in courts of law when the renovation of the two shrines was in progress[2] The history of the two shrines thus briefly summarized furnishes a conspicuous instance of the difference to practical life made by religion proper and religions as sects It would be wrong to infer, however that all was narrow sectarianism after Kulottunga II In the short reign of Adhirajendra (1067-70) we find an inscription recording the rebuilding in stone of a shrine of Varadaraja (Visnu) originally built of brick by Koccola in the precincts of a Śiva temple at Tiruvakkarai (South Arcot District) This late reference to Koccola i e Cola Śenganan (Red-eye) having built a Visnu temple is remarkable because the great Vaiṣṇava saint Tirumangai has praised that king in his hymns for having constructed seventy beautiful temples dedicated to the eight armed Isa (i e Śiva) Śenganān lived in the interval between the close of the Sangam age and

[2] T V Mahalingam *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar* p 325, n 86

the Hindu revival of the Pallava times (seventh century) At that time Hinduism was still an attitude to life as a whole and had not lost itself in the arid desert of sectarian rivalries But at all times even in the worst days of sectarianism there were some perhaps a very small minority wedded to true religion and rising above the narrow sectarianism of the day

The role of Vijayanagar as the defender of Hinduism in the South against Islam has been stressed more than once already The foundation of the empire was the culmination of a strong wave of religious revival and political excitement caused by the Sultanate of Delhi seeking to impose its sway on the Deccan and farther south in the early fourteenth century The first rulers of Vijayanagar proclaimed their special mission to the world among other things by commissioning a syndicate of scholars headed by Sayana Acarya to compose commentaries on the entire Veda and this monumental work which has survived almost in its entirety has been appraised differently by different Western scholars who have taken to vedic studies on modern philological lines An earlier commentary on the Rgveda known as *Rgartha dīpika* (light on the meaning of Rks) and composed by Venkata Madhava on the banks of the Kaveri river likewise coincided with the inauguration of the Cola empire in the tenth century under Parantaka I Again Śayana s brother Madhava was another prolific author whose works command great authority even now His commentary on *Parasarasmrti* known as *Parasara Madhaviyam* is an erudite work which restates the social code and includes an independent treatise on Vyavahara (secular law) which was neglected in the original text of Parasara He also wrote the *Jaiminiya Nyava mala* (the garland of the rules of Jaimini) and its *Vistara* (explanation) an abstract in verse and an explanation in prose of the subject matter of each section of *Sabarasvamin s bhasya* on the Mimamsa sutras of Jaimini His *Sarva darsana sangraha* gave a succinct survey of the principal systems of philosophy including several non vedic systems His *Dhatuvrtti* a commentary on the *Dhatupatha* (list of roots) ascribed to Panini is a distinct contribution to Sanskrit linguistics and suggests the derivation of quite a large number of words whose origin is not given in any other work

Vaiṣnava tradition preserved in the Śrirangam temple chronicle known as *Koyil olugu* (chronicle of the temple) and other works avers that the Ranganatha temple of Śrirangam was sacked twice by the Muslim invaders once during the invasion of Malik Kafur about 1310 11 and again during the Tughlak inroads of 1327 8 The different accounts differ much in details

and include a number of miracles But the main incidents that concern us and are not in any doubt are that on both occasions the defenders of the temple suffered considerable loss of life and property, that the movable subsidiary idols of the temple had to be hidden away, while the main images were carried over to other places, and that after Kumara Kampana's overthrow of the Sultanate of Madura, his commandant Goppana brought back the two main idols to Śrīrangam from Singavaram near Gingee and from the foot of Tirupati hill and had them duly installed in the renovated temple in 1370-71. The destruction of the tyrannical Sultanate of Madura (1334-71) is celebrated by the wife of the victor Kampana by name Ganga Devi in her exquisite Sanskrit *kavya* (epic) *Madhuravijayam* This conquest and the consequent restoration of Śrirangam must be counted as important landmarks in the history of South Indian Hinduism[3]

The Rayas of Vijayanagar (particularly those who came after the first Dynasty of Śaivas) were generally Vaiṣnavas, but tolerant in their outlook Their attempts to reconcile sectarian conflicts and ensure harmony have been noticed already Even Kaśivilasa Kriyaśakti, a Pasupata saint, who rivals Vidyāranya in the support he gave to Vijayanagar and the cause of the Hindu revival and who is acknowledged as their *guru* by several princes of the First Vijayanagar Dynasty, was very tolerant in his general outlook and not only approved of his disciples supporting Advaita and Vaisnava institutions but himself made endowments and grants to temples of Viṣnu All types of religions found encouragement from the Rayas Sometimes public debates were held in open court like that in which Vallabhacarya, the founder of a Vaiṣnava sect, is said to have vanquished *smarta* scholars in the reign of the celebrated Kṛṣnadeva Raya Royal patronage was extended even to Islam though neighbouring Muslim rulers sometimes bitterly persecuted their Hindu subjects Devaraya II (1422-46) built a mosque in his capital for the use of his Muslim soldiers

A staunch Vaisnava himself, Kṛṣnadēva Raya repaired and rebuilt the temple of Virūpakṣa (Siva) at Hampi very soon after his accession He made handsome gifts to the Śaiva as well as to Vaiṣnava temples The temples of Kāñcī Tirupati, Simhācalam and Ahobalam (all Vaiṣnava) as well as those of Tiruvannāmalai Cidambaram, Kalahasti, Srisailam and Amarāvatī (all Saiva) received liberal grants of land from him Smartas, Vaisṇavas and Jains were found in his service A fanatic Vīra

[3] The details are set forth fully and discussed by S Krishnaswami Aiyangar in his *South India and Her Muhammadan Invaders*

Śaiva chief of the lingayat community paid the extreme penalty because he massacred several Śvetambara Jain priests in the belief that thereby he was making an easy road for himself to heaven Duarte Barbosa records 'The king allows such freedom that every man may come and go, and live according to his own creed without suffering any annoyance and without inquiry, whether he is a Christian Jew Moor or Heathen Great equity and justice is observed by all' The same policy was continued by Krsnadeva Raya's successor Acyuta Raya The famous Rama Raya (son in law of Kṛṣnadeva) who wielded the real power in the state after Acyuta Raya caused the Quran to be placed before him in the Audience Hall in order to reconcile his Muslim soldiers to the act of making obeisance to him when they came to pay their respects, this had also been done by Devaraya II earlier He allowed them to build mosques and offer worship according to their practice as in a Muslim state He even risked the displeasure of his Hindu subjects and of his own brother Tirumala by refusing to adopt their suggestion that the Muslims should be forbidden to slaughter cows in the Turukavaḍa (Muslim quarter) The Vijayanagar sovereigns and the Nayaks of the empire often made substantial endowments to the Dargas of Muslim saints where miracles were believed to be performed and *hora* (horoscopy) was studied Venkaṭa II for instance renewed certain grants of villages to the Darga of Babayya at Penugonda in 1638 39 Mangammal the Nayak queen of Madura gave some villages near Trichinopoly in 1701-2 to the darga of Babanatta as the reward for a prophecy foretelling success in the state business of Tañjavur (Tanjore)

Some records seem to mention even a Christian Divan of Deva Raya II as early as 1445 After the coming of the Portuguese the Jesuits made converts from the people especially from among the Paravas of the Pearl Fishery Coast who were eager to escape the oppression of the Muslim monopolists of the industry by transferring their allegiance to Christianity and seeking the protection of Portugal Robert de Nobili s attempts, not very successful to gain converts from among Brahmins in Madura by leading the life of a Hindu *Sanyasi* have been noticed already Venkata II patronized the Jesuits after the manner of Akbar and organized debates between them and Hindu leaders He allowed them to establish their churches at Candragiri and Vellore and settled upon them an annual income of one thousand gold pieces which they employed in maintaining the Candragiri mission and a college at St Thome near Madras

Vaisnavism however naturally received special patronage,

and Tirupati, to which the emperors made frequent journeys even in the midst of the most arduous military campaigns, became the most important centre of Vaisnavism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and continues to retain its place to this day Telugu Vaiṣṇava tradition is eloquent about a Tātācārya who was the *guru* of Kṛṣṇadēva Rāya The *Jiyars* of Ahobalam *maṭha* played an important part in spreading Śrīvaiṣṇavism, and Van Śaṭhakopa Jīyar, the founder of the *maṭha*, was apparently in close touch with the court He was the *guru* of Allasani Peddana the poet laureate of Kṛṣṇadēva Rāya. Several Vaiṣṇava families, like the Kandāḍai and Paravastu, took to regular missionary work in the cause of Vaiṣṇavism, secured a large number of new disciples, and made Vaiṣṇavism the most influential faith in the country The other branch of Vaiṣṇavas, the Madhvas, also increased their numbers and influence as they produced great teachers like Akṣobhya Muni Brahmanyatīrtha, Vyāsa(raya) tīrtha and others The great saint Purandaradāsa, said to have been a convert of Vyāsarāya, enriched the faith by the hundreds of devotional songs he composed and set to music in the most popular tunes Vyāsarāya himself was the greatest expounder of the faith and deserves to rank as its second founder A pupil of Brahmaṇyatīrtha in his early years he was attached to the *maṭha* at Mulbagal, and then migrated, acting on the advice of his *guru*, to Candragiri where Sāluva Narasimha was holding court at the time before his accession to the throne in 1485-6 He then spent twelve years at Tirupati acting as *pujari* (worshipping priest) in the temple of Venkateśa, probably at the bidding of Sāluva Narasimha When Narasimha became king, Vyāsaraya *went over to the capital Vijayanagara along with him*, and became spiritual adviser of successive kings after the demise of Narasimha (1492) In Kṛṣnadēva Rāya's reign, it is said, that the king vacated the throne temporarily in favour of Vyasarāya in order to avoid the evil effects of an inauspicious conjunction of the planets and Vyasa is said to have taken the title *raya* in commemoration of this incident Vyasaraya survived Kṛṣnadeva Rāya and died at Vijayanagar about 1532, his tomb is still pointed out to the pious pilgrim on an island called Navabrndavanam (new sepulchre) in the Tungabhadra river about half a mile to the east of the site of the great city Though Madhvaism failed to attract many adherents in spite of the great teachers it produced, it made a notable contribution to popular religion by attaching very great importance to the worship of Hanuman, the *aide* and devotee of Rāma Madhvaism lost its importance after Krsnadēva Raya.

The Telugu and Kannada countries maintained quite a number of Liṅgāyat *mathas*, the most important of which were located at Śrīśailam, Sangameśvaram and Ummattūr. The monks who lived there propagated the Lingāyat faith and spent their time in studying the *āgamas* and allied literature that had grown up since the days of Basava in the twelfth century They used the local languages in preference to Sanskrit in their propaganda.

Jainism continued to be important in some centres, particularly in the Tuluva *rājya*, within which lay the important city of Śravana Belgola (lit the White Tank of the Jains) There was an important Jain *matha* here and another at Kāñcīpuram in the Padaivīdu *rājya*

The head of the *matha* had absolute authority in all matters including the selection of his successor This holds good of the *mathas* of all faiths The inmates of the *mathas* had no voice in their management and were under the complete control of the respective heads As a rule the *mathas* were centres of learning and took a prominent part in promoting education, both religious and secular, and morality among the people in the neighbourhood

Harihara II (1377-1404) had a minister Irugappa Dandanātha, who was a Jain and pupil of Puṣpasena; he built a Jain temple in the capital, the extant Ganigitti temple at Hampi, and another at Gutti for Pārśva Jinanātha He also patronized the Jain colony at Tirupparuttikunru near Kāñcīpuram And Devarāya II (1422-46) built a temple for Arhat Pārśvanatha in the Pān-supāri-bazaar (the market street where betel nuts and leaves were sold) at Vijayanagar Krsnadēva Rāya and his successors also continued to patronize Jainism as occasions offered themselves Of Buddhism, however, we hear very little in the period of Vijayanagar

The historic role of Vijayanagar and the increased stress on theism due to the spread of Vaisnavism and Lingāyatism gave a fresh impetus to temple building and organization, and the temple entered even more intimately into the social economy and the daily life of the people than ever before New temples were built and old ones enlarged, and all were enriched by fresh endowments in land and cash The daily routine of temple worship became more elaborate and its assimilation to the routine of the palace of a king or chieftain was completed The number of persons who found their livelihood in their participation in the holy work of the temple increased proportionately with the increase in the temple's resources, musicians, dancers, florists and perfumers, pipers and drummers, goldsmiths and jewellers found more or less regular employment in the palaces and temples, and

found exceptional opportunities of profit during festivals, monthly and annual With the large increase in gifts of land, cash, etc to the temples both from the state and the devotees temple management became a complicated and responsible duty, and we begin to hear more and more in the inscriptions and records of the time of the *sthānikas* or temple-trustees either acting singly or as boards though the exact manner of their appointment is not easy to ascertain Some may have been imposed by government, others chosen by big donors or the consensus of devotees, the children of a single trustee (*sthānika*) may after his death have divided the duties among themselves and thus grown into a board In any event the government exercised a general supervision over all temples and their administrations and did not hesitate to interfere through the agency of a special staff when things went wrong But the regular cultivation of temple lands including the regulation of tenancies and leases and investment of temple monies as well as the control of the temple staff, which included a considerable number in large temples vested in the *sthānikas* The temple office or *cavadi* engaged accountants (*karnams*) who assisted the *sthānikas*, and all offices tended to become hereditary, so long as the incumbents continued to give reasonable satisfaction all round by their capacity and conduct Sometimes specific taxes were assigned to a temple and their collection was part of the duties of the officials of the temple The salary of the officials generally comprised a daily share in the *prasadam* (food offerings) of the temple and a periodical payment in cash or kind The chief executive officer of the temple is often called *Parupatyagar* or *Manigar*, terms borrowed from the revenue administration of the village, but there is little information on the mode of his choice or the range and limits of his duties We can only surmise that the office was taken by turns among the *sthanikas* where there were more than one Each important temple had necessarily to maintain a well guarded strong room as its treasury (*Sribhandara*) where the cash and jewellery of the temple were stored The school, the *dharmasana* (court of justice), occasional meetings of castes and guilds, hostels and hospitals — all were accommodated in the extensive premises of the temple without prejudice to its primary objects in the religious field

To complete the picture of religious life and practices in the Vijayanagar empire we must advert to the village deities of the Little Tradition and to the conditions of travel attendant on pilgrimages to holy places which became increasingly popular The 'village deities' generally of the female sex and regarded

as manifestations of Durgā did not stop with the villages, but found a place in specific parts of cities, and even in the Capital city of Vijayanagar Their worship involved animal sacrifices with which the slaughter of animals for food also got mixed up The Portuguese chronicler Paes records 'At the door of one of these (temples) they kill every day many sheep, for in all the city they do not kill any sheep for the use of the Heathen, or for sale in the markets, except at the gates of this pagoda Of their blood they make sacrifices to the idol that is in the temple There is present at the slaughter of these beasts a *jogi*, who has charge of the temple, and as soon as they cut off the head of the sheep or goat, the *jogi* blows a horn as a sign that the idol receives that sacrifice' If Paes has recorded the facts correctly, and we have no reason to doubt it, the temple he had in view was both a place of worship and the *abattoir* of the capital city But the most important festival of Vijayanagar was the *mahanavami* celebrated in honour of Durga herself (along with Lakṣhmi and Sarasvatī) for nine days 'The first day', says Nuniz, another Portuguese chronicler, 'they kill nine male buffaloes and nine sheep and nine goats and thenceforward they kill each day more, always doubling the number' The ninth day must have witnessed a veritable holocaust in which 2304 animals of each of the three varieties mentioned must have perished Paes, however, puts the figures differently and says that the sacrifices on the last day were 250 buffaloes and 4 500 sheep, this butchery took place before the eyes of the Rāya and his nobles[4]

Another grisly aspect of Vijayanagar religion was hook-swinging which took place in almost all village *Jatras* or festivals and caused much excitement among the rural population The women anointed their heads in lukewarm oil and bathed in water mixed with the yellow turmeric powder, then they put on new clothes and visited the temple built in the rice fields outside the village People from neighbouring villages, particularly the Reḍḍis (headmen), attended with their spouses Goats were slaughtered in numbers and liquor flowed in large quantities, the uproar of the gathered crowd filled the air Several women chose the occasion to fulfil their vows, some swung from beams by hooks which tore into their flesh in the loins, blood dripping down their legs, others plunged in a 'fire river' — a long narrow pit filled with blazing charcoal, a third group entered a *panduri-gunda* or a circular pit of fire with a temporary shed over it,

[4] For more details of festivals see T V Mahalingam *op cit*, pp 338 44

others offered to the deity bits of flesh cut off from their shoulders There is no reason to think that these details gathered from the literature of the time at all exaggerate the position in the field of popular religion, the testimony of foreign travellers confirms them in almost every detail We may also recall the sculptures of the late Pallava and imperial Cola times depicting devotees offering their own heads to Durga to propitiate her by exhibiting their devotion in this strange manner, some years back J Ph Vogel drew pointed attention to the sculptures and the practice they commemorated in a contribution to the *Bulletin of the London School of Oriental Studies*

Pilgrimages to holy places became more common than ever before in the Vijayanagar empire and they were also attended by much risk of the pilgrims being robbed on the way, even though they travelled in company The Rayas themselves and their numerous feudatories set the example by their frequent pilgrimages and it was followed extensively by the lesser people who were by no means so well off Contemporary literature and copper plate grants are full of lists of holy places pilgrimages to which and *maha danas* (great gifts) made at which ensured a passage to heaven One copper plate grant for instance mentions Cidambaram under the name *Kanakasadas* (Golden Hall); Śrīkakulam, Kalahasti, Venkaṭādri (Tirupati), Kāñcī, Śrīśaila Sonaśaila (Tiruvannamalai), Harihar, Ahobalam, Sangamesvar, Śriranga, Kumbakonam, Mahanandi, Gokarna, Anantaśayanam (Trivandrum) and Ramesvara, a list which includes both Saiva and Vaisnava shrines The pilgrims thus traversed long distances and many did it on foot for greater merit They were helped by the rest houses and *prapās*, places where water and dilute butter-milk with condiments were supplied free to refresh travellers, these places were located at relatively short intervals on the route and endowed by charitable persons The keepers of *prapas* were generally Brahmin women, and some literary writers have a fling at the travellers lingering too long in *prapās* where the attendants were attractive young women Often carts drawn by bullocks or the bullocks themselves and horses were hired by travellers who could afford to pay V I P s as we should call them now, travelled with the aid of palanquins carried on the shoulders of bearers A small store of articles of food and change of clothes and a shawl or two in cold weather formed the usual baggage of the common wayfarers They began the journey well before sunrise and stopped it for the day before it became too hot Shady groves and fresh water tanks on the way gave added amenities *en route* on some roads, a spreading banyan tree often serving as

a fairly crowded camp Strict caste rules were very much relaxed during travel as is evident from the common saying *pathi śudra vad acaret*, one may adopt the ways of the śudra when one is travelling

The traditions and practices of Vijayanagar were continued almost to the end of the eighteenth century in the South by the rulers of the subordinate states of Gingee Tanjore Madura Ikkeri and Mysore which continued to support the old religious institutions in a liberal measure even after they became virtually independent But the mantle of Vijayanagar as the Defender of Hinduism against Islam fell upon Śivaji who linked up his political work with the great *bhakti* movement in Maharaṣṭra by accepting Ramadas as his *guru* That movement goes back to the end of the thirteenth century when Jnanesvara s work gave an impetus to the ideals of mysticism and *bhakti* in Western India His brothers and his sister also contributed to the development of the mystic life and literature of the time A century later came Namdeva (c 1430) a tailor by birth and occupation who how ever spent most of his time in composing hymns of high quality in Marathi and Hindi and propagating the *bhakti* cult in Maratha country and the Panjab his hymns show clear traces of the influence of Islamic thought particularly in their deprecation of idolatry and are found in the *Granth* the sacred book of the Sikhs The next eminent name is that of Eknath (d 1608) a Brahmin from Paithan and a monist in philosophy who opposed caste and translated parts of the *Bhāgavata purana* into Marathī verse which is still sung in the temple at Pandharpur he has also left a collection of twenty six *abhangs* called Haripath A petty shop keeper Tukaram (1608-49) who took up the thread was a contemporary of Śivaji in his youth he was passionately devoted to Viṭhoba of Pandharpur and wrote some of the most moving devotional hymns in his language which are replete with his vivid consciousness of the omniscience of his god His hymns have been judged to have been the largest religious influence in the Marātha country His own religious life fully occupied his soul and when Śivaji invited him to his court to be his *guru* he sent him a few verses in reply and advised him to become a disciple of Rāmadās The original name of Ramadās was Narāyana Born in 1608 and orphaned of his father when he was twelve he left home soon after and realized God by his penance at a place near Nasik After wandering throughout India for another twelve years he finally settled at Chaphal on the banks of the Kṛṣnā where he built a temple He assumed the name Rāmadās evidently under the influence of the Rāmānandi move-

ment started by Rāmānada (c 1430), a follower at first of Rāmānuja's Śrivaiṣṇavism Rāmadās was more practical than Tukārām and better fitted to be the guide of Śivaji He organized an order of ascetics and established monasteries throughout Mahārāṣtra His *ābhangs* have not the same wide appeal as Tukārām's, but his *Dasabodha* synthesizes his vast knowledge of various sciences with the spiritual principle From about 1650 he exercised great influence over Śivaji The Rām-dāsis still form a small sect perpetuating the name of Rāmadās, they wear a sect mark and use a secret *mantra* of their own They have their headquarters at Sajjangarh (near Satara) where there is the *Samadhi* (tomb) of Ramadas a temple to Rāma and a Ramadāsi *matha* The renascent Hinduism of Mahārāṣtra brought about the formal recognition, after solemn ceremonies of Śivaji as a Kṣatriya king and the celebration of his coronation (*abhiseka*) with Vedic rites and officiating Brahmins Though the Maratha state under Śivaji thus formally signified its particular concern for Hinduism under his successors including the Brahmin Peshwas it assumed outside Mahāraṣtra proper, an incurably predatory character which showed no inclination to spare Hindu temples and *mathas* from being robbed of their accumulated properties and treasures

The religious movement was represented early in the eighteenth century by a Brahmin poet Śridhara who presented the stories of the two epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, in stirring Marathī verse which attained much popularity A little later Mahipati wrote the lives of the devotees and saints of Maharastra in a number of works such as *Santa Lilamrta* (1757) — the nectar of the sports of the saints, *Bhakta Vijaya* (1762) — the triumph of the devotees, *Bhakta Līlamrta* (1774) — the nectar of the sports of devotees, and *Santa Vijaya* the triumph of the saints

The Śaiva tradition in the Tamil country waxed strong both in literature and in the field of practice At the end of the fourteenth century and beginning of the fifteenth came Svarupananda Deśikar and his pupil Tattuvarayar Both were asectics and authors of many devotional poems and songs remarkable for the simplicity of their diction and their wide appeal to the common man the songs were of the nature of ditties which created many new models for subsequent composers The teacher and pupil were also responsible respectively for the compilation of a large (2824 verses) and a smaller (half the larger) anthology in Tamil on the philosophy of Advaita which together conserve much of the religious and philosophical literature of the silver age of

Tamil Saivism, which might otherwise have been lost Even wider in its appeal was the *Tiruppugal* (the Holy Praise) of Arunagirinātha, over 1360 songs in various metres handled with the utmost skill and characterized by a charming lilt The diction is highly sanskritized and the imagery vivid The author's intimate knowledge of the sacred lore of Hinduism is evident in every song His mention of Praudhadeva Raya (of Vijayanagar ?) places him in the fifteenth century His songs betray evidence of a youthful life of libertinism followed by remorse He accepted Muruga or Kārttikeya as the supreme deity, and in philosophy he followed the Śaiva Siddhanta system He seems to have visited all the shrines of Muruga and been particularly attached to Palani which figures largely in the *Tiruppugal* He was perhaps also author of shorter devotional poems, all in praise of Muruga Tayumanavar is another great Śaiva saint who belonged to the seventeenth century and is still a living force in South Indian religious life A Vellala by birth, he was at first attached to the temple of Vedāranyam (Tanjore District) His learning and character soon got him high office under the Nayak ruler of Madura, when the ruler died, the widowed queen tempted him with the offer of her hand and kingdom This was the turning point After giving her much good advice, Tayumānavar left her service to become a seeker of God and Truth His hymns constitute a simple and moving record of his experiences and are still popular, being often sung in musical concerts He tries to reconcile Advaita and Śaiva Siddhanta by playing down their differences often over-emphasized by controversialists Another group of five saints, also of the seventeenth century, professed adherence to the Lingāyat faith, they were Śivaprakasa I, Śāntalinga, Kumaradeva, Śivaprakāśa II, and Cidambara Svāmin, all men of high spiritual attainments and authors of hymns and treatises

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the growing impact of Western ideas and civilization on the East as a result of trade contacts at first, soon replaced by colonial conquest and exploitation The printing press, the Christian missionary, and the rapidly improving means of communication are notable elements Bentinck and the younger officials who came out to India in the twenties of the nineteenth century were under the influence of the humanitarian reform movement and felt that they had a moral mission towards the people under their rule as representatives of a higher civilization and a better religion — another factor in the attack from the West Different sections of Indians reacted differently to the changing situation The un-

successful rising of 1857 was an attempt to deal with the problem on a physical plane and by force A rebel proclamation found in Lucknow in 1858 affirmed that the British wished to destroy caste and convert Hindus and Muslims to Christianity, that in their eyes the low castes were the equals of nobles, that they disgraced the nobles in the presence of the ignoble, and summoned to their courts the gentry, Nawabs and Rajas at the instance of Chamars and disgraced them India was still far from accepting democracy and the rule of law as ideals On the mental and spiritual plane the reactions were more complex For a time western rationalism captivated forward minds and promoted an excessive iconoclastic zeal Traditions, ancestral practices and beliefs were denounced, and India's salvation was held to depend on their total abandonment Several adopted western ways of life wholesale, and even went over to Christianity, and Macaulay's belief that the new enlightenment would kill Hinduism and make India Christian appeared to be plausible This was, however, only a passing phase, and it received a check from the growing strength of other phases of the reaction The great body of the people were conservative and orthodox, eager to retain the *status quo* and suspicious of innovation, though ready to avail themselves of the new methods of organization and polemics, and to resort, not to violence, but to the new law courts in defence of their cause taking full advantage of the crown policy of non-interference in the religious and social traditions of the people They formed the Dharma Sabha, the predecessor of the Hindu Mahāsabha of today, and opposed reformist legislation which abolished *Sati*, raised the Age of Consent, or permitted the remarriage of widows

But the future lay, as time was to show, with the small body of intellectuals who were stimulated by the new knowledge into reforming Hinduism and Hindu society from within enabling it to meet the new challenge by blending all that was essential and true in the old and the new cultures Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first and by far the most celebrated member of this group He supported the abolition of *Sati* and the introduction of western education through the medium of the English language While acknowledging the value of Christian ethics, he offended the Serampore missionaries by questioning the divinity of Christ Like Luther taking his stand on the Bible, he appealed to the purer Hinduism of the earlier scriptures the Vedas and Upanisads In 1828 he founded the Brahma Sabha and opened a *mandir* (temple) dedicated to Brahman, the impersonal absolute, with no image in it The Brahma Samaj founded in 1845 by

Maharsi Dēvendranath Tagore, the father of the poet Rabīndranath Tagore, was the outcome of Ram Mohan's work We need not pursue in detail the history of this movement, but just note that it gathered a few adherents in South India in the latter half of the nineteenth century and was at no time an influence of much power

In the nineteenth century we are once more in a period when powerful forces of an all-India character are at work, and it is not easy to isolate specifically South Indian developments as such Reform on distinctly Hindu lines was carried forward by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1835 86), mystic untouched by Christianity or Western education and a devotee of the goddess Kālī But after he attained realization of Truth on orthodox lines, he undertook experiments in other faiths and discovered that all religions are at one in their core, thus adding his personal testimony to the age old truth which had determined the general tolerant outlook of Hinduism His religion was animated by a vivid social consciousness, 'who dare talk of showing mercy to fellowmen?' he said 'not mercy, but service, service for man, must be regarded as God' His celebrated pupil Vivekānanda (1862-1902) institutionalized Ramakrishna's ideals of social service He surprised America by his eloquent and lucid presentation of Vedanta and Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 and on other platforms He had more to do with South India than his *guru* and spent some time in the city of Madras on different occasions He organized the Ramakrishna mission, a potent agency for the regeneration of Hinduism and for social work both in India and abroad, the Mission runs a Maṭha, a Students' Home, a college and several High Schools in Madras Vivekananda laid stress on the broad basis of Hinduism, its tolerance and catholicity The Arya Samaj of Dayānanda Sarasvatī (1824-83) founded in 1875 takes its stand on the Vedas as interpreted by the founder, repudiates the hereditary caste system and untouchability and admits the remarriage of widows It has been more influential in Western and Northern India than in the South It has aimed at reclaiming to Hinduism those who had left it for Christianity and Islam by organizing the Suddhi (purification) movement This movement of proselytization was particularly successful in Malabar, Rajputana and Uttar Pradesh, some Samājists fell martyrs to it becoming victims of the fanaticism of rival creed of Islam The Ārya Samaj maintains several colleges which combine a 'Western' curriculum with Hindu religious teaching besides its Gurukula near Hardwar and girls' schools free from a foreign

atmosphere The Prārthanā Samāj started in 1867, was the West Indian counterpart of Brahma Samāj and enlisted such leaders of thought as Justice Ranade, Sir R G Bhandarkar and G K Gokhale among its members, it laid more stress on social reform than on religious reconstruction as such The Theosophical movement began in India (after an insignificant American phase) in 1878 under Madam Blavatsky, and her pupil Mrs Annie Besant carried the exaltation of Hinduism as against Christianity one stage further, but was not altogether free from obscurantism, the Central Hindu College founded by Mrs Besant has developed into the Benares Hindu University Tilak's interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* as the Gospel of an activist ethic was perhaps not uninfluenced by the West Besides giving a fillip to the political movement which had been gathering force since the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885, it did much to convert modern Hinduism into an ethical code with a wide social outlook The writings of Sir S Radhakrishnan have offered an integral reinterpretation of Hindu religious thought and philosophy in a manner which is at once authoritative and couched in language more readily followed in the West than translations of texts like those in the Sacred Books of the East edited by Max Müller with the collaboration of several scholars Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) also did much to divert attention from distinctively Christian influences Tagore was more a poet and thinker than a prophet or man of action, his forceful writings extending over an unusually long stretch of time drove home his rational and humanitarian outlook combining all that is best in eastern and western thought, he was a citizen of the world, with a deep love for whatever was racy of the soil Gandhi was on the whole a traditionalist and perhaps owed more to Marathi mystic poetry and the *Bhagavad Gīta* than to Thoreau and Tolstoy Islam and the Sermon on the Mount His emphasis on human solidarity and brotherhood his compassion for the poor and the outcastes his ascetic passion for the simple life, his stress on a positive experience of God and a life of service and sacrifice, his message of Truth Love and *Ahimsa* (non-violence), and his insistence by example and precept on the efficacy of vicarious suffering were all derived from Hindu precedents But their integration into a social and political gospel of dynamic power which attached as much importance to the purity of the means as of the ends was his personal contribution His life's work conferred a new value on old concepts and helped India to discover her true self There were other forces in South India

working in a similar direction though less influential such as the life and work of Ramana Maharṣi of Tiruvannamalai, of Aurobindo Ghose at Pondicherry and of others. Though the West has influenced Hindu thought only to a small degree, its challenge has led Hinduism to reconsider its social practices and restate the fundamentals of its faith in terms of the present world context.

A notable contemporary of Ramakrishna in South India was Ramalingasvami, a saint on the old model and a prolific hymnist in Tamil. He had little learning, and poetry was his natural gift which he employed to translate his vision of god (as Murugan) to the world. He was grieved at sectarian differences and was a staunch advocate of the path of harmony (*samarasa*). At Vadalur in South Arcot, the place of his birth, he built a shrine in which the flame of an oil lamp was the only object of worship. He exhorted all to transcend caste, creed and scriptures and to realize the oneness of God through love and compassion for all living beings. He disappeared mysteriously in 1892 and people believe he may come back. His hymns are still very popular.

The present position in the world of Religion and the Indian reaction to it have been succinctly summed up by Radhakrishnan: 'Many of the Living faiths are passing through self-criticism, are getting infected with secularism and humanism and the loss of the vision of God. Many of the leaders regard themselves as priests of a new religion. We need not a new religion but a creative vitality in the practice of the old, the recognition that the Kingdom of Heaven lies within man, in his depths, in his integrity, in his inmost truth. God is the potentiality of every man.'

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